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POETICAL WORKS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

EDITED BY ROBERT BELL

VOLUME VI

LONDON
JOHN W. PARKER AND SON WEST STRAND
1855

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THE

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BY

ROBERT BELL,

AUTHOR OF

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POEMS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

TROYLUS AND CRYSEYDE.

LIBER QUINTUS—CONTINUED.

WHEN they unto the paleys were ycomen
Of Troylus, they doun of hors alighte,
And to the chaumbre hire wey han they nomen;
And, into tyme that it gan to nyghte,[1]
Thei spoken of Cryseyde, the lady brighte;
And efter this, when that hem bothe leste,
They spedde hem fro the soper unto reste.

O morw, as soone as day bigan to clere,
This Troylus gan of his slepe to abreyde,
And to Pandare, his owen brother deere,
'For love of God,' ful pitously he preyde,
'As go we sene the paleys of Cryseyde;
For, syn we yit may have ne moore feste,
So lat us seen hire paleys at the leste.'

And therwithal, his meyne for to blende,
A cause he fonde in towne for to go,
And to Cryseydes hous they gon hem wende;
But, Lorde! this cely Troylus was wo!
Hym thought[2] his sorwful herte braste atwo;
For when he saugh hire dores spered alle,
Wel neigh for sorwe adoun he gan to falle.

[1] *Nyghte* is here a verb, meaning to grow dark.
[2] For this form of expression, see vol. v. p. 139, note 3.

Therwith, when he was ware, and gan biholde
How shet was every wyndow of the place,
As frost hym thoughte his herte gan to colde;
For which, with chaunged deedlich pale face,
Withouten worde, he forth bygan to pace;
And, as God wolde, he gan so faste ryde,
That no wight of his countenance espyed.

Than seyde he thus:—'O paleys desolat!
O hous of housses,[1] whilom best yhight!
O paleys empti and disconsolat!
O thow lanterne, of which queynt is the light!
O paleys, whylom day, that now ert nyght!
Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye,
Syn she is wente that wonte was us to gye.[2]

'O paleys, whilom crowne of houses alle,
Enlumyned with sonne of alle blisse!
O ryng, fro which the ruby is out falle!
O cause of wo, that cause has ben of blisse!
Yit, syn I may no bet, fayn wold I kisse
Thy colde doores, dorst I for this route;
And farewel, shryne, of which the seint is oute!'

[1] The expression 'house of houses,' means most excellent of houses. Thus, over the door of the beautiful chapter-house in York Minster is the legend, preserved from mediæval times,

'Ut rosa flos florum, sic *domus* ista *domorum*.'

This is not Virgilli in Latin.

[2] To *gye* means to guide. Troylus addresses the palace as having been, in common with himself, under the guidance of Cryseyde.

[3] These pretty images of the lantern, of which the light is quenched, the ring from which the ruby is fallen, the shrine from which the saint has been removed, belong exclusively to Chaucer. In the *Filostrato* the passage is as follows:—

'E con l'andaro poi, come potè, doglioso,
Della sua nova angoscia ragionava;
E, po dicea, Lasso, quanto luminoso
Era il locho piacevole, quanto stava
In te quella belta ch 'l mio riposso
Dentro dal locho suo tutto portava,
Or se rimaso obscura senza lei;
Non so se mai rivederla tu dei.'

This is quoted from a black letter edition, printed at Milan in

Therwith he caste on Pandarus his eye,
With chaunged face, and pitous to beholde;
And, whan he myght his tyme aright aspie,
Ay as he rode, to Pandarus he told
His newe sorwe, and ek his joyes olde,
So pitously, and with so dede an hewe,
That every wight myght on his sorwes rewe.

Fro thennes-forth he rydeth up and down,
And every thynge com hym to remembraunce,
As he rode forth by the places of the town,
In which he whilom had alle his plesaunce:—
'Lo! yonder saugh ich myn owen lady daunce;
And in that temple, with hire eyen clere,
Me caughte firste my righte lady deere.

'And yonder have I herd ful lustily
My deere herte laugh; and yonder pleye
Saugh ich hire oones ek ful blisfully;
And yonder oones to me gan she seye
'Now goode swete! love me wel, I preye;
And yonder so gladly gan she me beholde,
That to the deth myn herte is to hire holde.

'And, at that corner in the yonder house,
Herde I myn alderlevest lady deere,
So wommanly, with vois melodyouse,
Syngen so wel, so goodely and so clere,
That in my soule yit me thynketh ich here
The blisful sown; and in that yonder place
My lady first me tooke unto hire grace.'

1488. It will be seen that the orthography differs from that of modern Italian in being much more like that of Latin; insomuch so that Boccaccio and Chaucer may well call Italian *Latino volgare*, and *a maner Latyn corupt*. The extreme similarity between the two languages, particularly when Latin is spoken, as it was in the middle ages, with the broad Italian intonation of the vowels, strengthens the probability that Chaucer understood Italian, and took this, and other poems and passages in his works, direct from Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Dante.

Than thought he thus, 'O blisful lord Cupide!
When I the processe have in memorye,
How thow me hast weryed on every syde,
Men myght a booke make of it lyk a story!
What nede is thee to seke on me victorye,
Syn I am thyn, and holly at thi wille?
What joye hastow thyn owene folk to spille?

'Wel hastow, lord, ywroke on me thyn ire,
Thow myghty god! and dredeful for to greve!
Now mercy, god! thow woost wel I desire
Thy grace moost, of alle lustes leeve!
And lyve and dye I wol in thi beleve;
For which I naxe in guerdon but a boone,
That thow Cryseyde ayein me sende soone.

'Destreyne hire herte as faste to retourne,
As thow doost myn to longen hire to se;
Than woote I wel that she nyl naught sojourne:
Now, blisful lorde! so cruwel thow ne be
Unto the blode of Troye, I preye the,
As Juno was unto the blode Thebane,
For which the folk of Thebes caught hire bane.'

And efter this he to the yates wente,
Ther as Cryseyde oute rod, a ful good pas,
And up and doun ther made he many a wente,
And to hym self ful oft he seyde, 'Allas!
Fro hennes rod my blisse and my solas!
As wolde blisful God now for his joye,
I myght hire seen ayein come into Troie!

'And to the yonder hille I gan hire gyde;
Allas! and ther I took of hire my leeve;
And yonde I saugh hire to hire fader ryde,
For sorwe of which myn herte shal to-cleve;
And hider hom I com when it was eve;
And here I dwelle, out cast from alle joye,
And shal, til I may seen her eft in Troye.'

And of hym selfe ymagyned he ofte,
To be defet, and pale, and waxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men seyde softe,
'What may it be? who kan the sothe gesse,
Why Troylus hath alle this hevynesse?'
And al this nas but his melencolye,
That he hadde of hym self such fantasye.

Another tyme ymagynen he wolde,
That every wight that wente by the weye,
Hadde of him routhe, and that they seyne sholde,
'I am right sory, Troylus wel deye.'
And thus he drof a day yit forth or tweye,
As ye have herde; swich lyf right gan he lede,
As he that stoode bitwixen hope and drede.

For which hym liked in his songes shewe
Thencheson of his wo, as he best myght,
And made a songe, of wordes but a fewe,
Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte:
And when he was from every mannes sighte,
With softe voys, he of his lady deere,
That absent was, gan synge as ye may here.

'O sterre, of which I lost have alle the lighte,
With herte soore, wel oughte I to bewayle,
That evere derke in tourmente, nyght by nyght,
Towarde my deth, with wynde I stere and sayle;
For whiche the tenthe night if that I faile[1]
The gidynge of thi bemes bright an houre,
My ship and me Caribdes wol devoure.'

---

[1] *Fail* appears to mean here 'to want, or be destitute of.' The direct construction is, 'Wherefore, if I am destitute of thy bright beams for a single hour on the tenth night [that night on which she had promised to return], Charybdis will devour my ship and me.' This song is quite different in the *Filostrato*:—

'La dolce vista, e'l bel guardo soave
De piu begli occhi che si vede sono mai,
Ch' io perdutto, fa parer si grave
La vitta mia,' &c.

This songe when he thus songen hadde, soone
He fel ayein into his sikes olde;
And every nyght, as was he wone to doone,
He stood, the bryghte moone to beholde;
And al his sorwe he to the moone tolde,
And seyd, 'Ywis, when thow ert horned newe
I shal be glad, if alle the world be trewe.

'I saugh thyne hornes olde eke by the morwe,
Whan hennes rode my righte lady deere,
That cause is of my tourment and my sorwe;
For which, O bright Lucina[1] the clere!
For love of God! renne fast aboute thy spere;
For when thyne hornes newe gynnen springe,
Than shal she come that may my blisse bringe.'

The day is moore, and longer evere ryght
Than they ben wonte to be, hym thoughte tho;
And that the sonne wente his course unrigh'
By longer weye than it was wonte to go;
And seyde, 'Ywis, me dredeth evere emo
The sonnes sone, Pheton,[2] be on lyve,
And that his fader carte amys he dryve.'

Upon the walles fast ek wolde he walke,
And on the Grekes oost he wolde see;
And to hymself right thus he wolde talke:—
'Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,
Or elles yonder, ther the tentes be,
And thennes cometh this eyre that is so soote,
That in my soule I feele it doth me boote.

---

[1] MS. 2280 reads *Latona*, who was the mother of Apollo and Diana: but as Troylus is addressing the moon, Lucina, the reading of the printed edition is probably correct.

[2] Phaeton, son of Apollo and Clymene. In order to prove that he was indeed the son of a god, he prevailed on his father to allow him to drive his chariot for one day; but the horses becoming unmanageable, carried him so near the earth that it was in danger of being consumed by the heat; and Jupiter, to avert such a calamity, killed Phaeton with a thunderbolt. See Ovid, *Met.* i. Troylus supposes that Phaeton is again driving the chariot of the sun, and is driving it too fast.

'And hardyly, this wynd that moore and moore
Thus stoundemele[1] encresseth in my face,
Is of my lady depe sykes sore;
I preve it thus, for in noon other place
Of all this town, save oonly in this space,
Feele I no wynde that souneth so lyke peyne;
It seith 'Allas![2]' why twynned be we tweyne?'

This longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus,
Til fully passed was the nynthe nyght;
And ay bysyde hym was this Pandarus,
That bisily dide al his fulle myght
Hym to comforte, and make his herte light;
Yevyng hym hope alweye, the tenthe morwe
That she shal come, and stenten al his sorwe.

Upon that other syde eke was Cryseyde
With wommen few amang the Grekes stronge,
For which ful oft a day, 'Allas!' she seyde,
'That I was borne! wel may myne herte longe
After my deth, for now lyve I to longe;
Allas! and I ne may it not amende,
For now is worse than evere yit I wende.

'My fader nyl for nothinge do me grace
To gon ayein, for nought I kan hym queme;
And if so be that I my terme pace,
My Troylus shal in his herte deme
That I am fals, and so it may wel seme.
Thus shall ich have unthonke on every syde;
That I was borne, so walaway the tyde!

'And if that I me put in jeupartye,
To stele awey by nyghte, and it befalle
That I be caught, I shal be hold a spye;

---

[1] *Stownd* means time; *mele* by small portions; stound-mele, therefore, signifies gradually.

[2] The word *Alas* resembles the sighing of the wind.

Or elles, lo! this drede I moost of alle,
If in the hondes of som wreche I falle,
I nam but lost, al be myn herte trewe:
Now myghty God, thow on my sorwe rewe!'

Ful pale ywoxen was hire brighte face,
Her lymmes lene, as she that al the day
Stood when she dorste, and loked on the place
Ther she was borne, and she dwelt had ay,
And al the nyght weping, allas! she lay;
And thus, despeyred oute of alle cure,
She ledde hire lyf, this woful creature.

Ful oft a day she sighte ek for destresse,
And in hire self she wente ay pourtreyng
Of Troylus the grete worthinesse,
And alle his goodely wordes recordynge,
Syn first the day hire love bigan to sprynge;
And thus she sette hire woful herte afire,
Thorugh remembrance of that she gan desire.

In al this world ther nys so cruwel herte,
That hire hadde herd compleyne in hire sorwe,
That nold han wopen for hire peynes smerte;
So tendrely she wepte, bothe eve and morwe,
Hire neded non teris for to borwe;
And this was yet the werste of al hyre peyne,
Ther was no wight, to whom she dorste hire pleyne.

Ful rewfully[1] she loked upon Troye,
Byhelde the toures heigh, and ek the hallis;
'Allas!' quod she, 'the plesaunce and the joye,
The which that now al tourned into galle is,
Have ich hadde oft withinne yonder wallis!
O Troylus, what dostow now?' she seyde;
'Lord! whether thow thynke yet upon Cryseyde!

[1] The Harl. MS. 2280 reads *joyfully*. *Rewfully* is the reading of Speght and Urry. Yet if we read *joyfully*, the sentence might mean that she would gladly look upon Troy.

'Allas! I nadde ytrowed on your lore,
And wente with yow, as ye me redde or this,
Thanne had I now not siked half so sore:
Who myght han seyde, that I had don amys,
To stele awey with swich oon as he is?
But al to late cometh the latuarye,
When men the cors unto the grave carye.'[1]

'To late is now to speke of that matere,
Prudens, allas! oon of thyne eyen thre[2]
Me lakked alwey, er that I com here:
For on tyme passed wel remembred mee,
And present tyme ek koude ich wel ysee;
But future tyme, er I was in the snare,
Koude I not sen; that causeth now my care.

'But natheles, betide what betide,
I shal to morw at nyght, by est or weste,
Out of this oostе stele, on som maner side,
And gon with Troylus, wher as hym leste;
This purpos wol I hold, and this is beste,
No fors of wikked tonges janglerye,[3]
For evere on love han wreches hadde envye.

'For who so wole of every worde take hede,
Or rulen hym by every wightes wit,
Ne shal he nevere thryven, out of drede;
For that that som men blamen evere yit,
Loo! other maner folk comenden it;

---

[1] This is a very familiar image to use on such an occasion, and highly characteristic of Chaucer. Cryseyde says, 'It is too late for a physician to prescribe an electuary when the corpse is carried to the grave.' Electuaries and cordials, composed of all sorts of ingredients, formed a large part of the materia medica of the middle ages. Even Lord Bacon prescribes a sort of electuary as a specific to ensure long life.

[2] Prudence is represented with three eyes, one, called remembrance, to look on the past; another, called perception, to observe the present; and a third, called foresight, to anticipate the future. From the information conveyed to the understanding by these three, Prudence forms her judgment.

[3] That is, 'No matter for the scandal of wicked tongues.'

And as for me, for alle swich variaunce,
Felicitie clepe I my suffisaunce.[1]

'For which, withouten any wordes moo,
To Troye I wol, as for conclusioun.'
But, God it woot! er fully moneths two,
She was ful fer fro that entencioun!
For bothe Troylus and Troyes town
Shal knotles thoroughout hire herte slyde,[2]
For she wol take a purpos for tabide.

This Dyomede, of whom yow telle I gan,
Goth now withinne hymself ay arguynge,
With al the sleighte and alle that evere he kan,
How he may best with shortest taryinge,
Into his net Cryseydes herte brynge;
To this entente he coude nevere fyne,[3]
To fisshen hire, he layde out hook and lyne.

But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte,
That she nas nat without a love in Troye,
For nevere sithen he hire thennes broughte,
Ne coude he sen her laughe, or maken joye;
He nyst how best hire herte for tacoie,[4]
But for tassaye, he seyde 'nought it ne greveth,
For he that nought nassayeth, nought nacheveth.'

---

[1] That is, 'That which makes me content I call felicity, or the *summum bonum*.' Felicity is used in this sense in the General Prologue. See vol. i. p. 92:—

'For he was Epicurius owne sone,
That heeld opynyoun that pleyn delyt
Was verrayly *felicite* perfyt.'

[2] That is, 'As a line without a knot in it slides through the hand without stopping, so easily did all care for Troylus and Troy slide out of her heart.'

[3] *Fyne* means to end.

[4] This word is derived from the French *coie* or *coy*, quiet, tame; hence to *acoie* is to make tame, and, when applied to wild animals, to entrap. Our modern *decoy* is, in fact, the same word. The decoy men on Fritton Broad, in Suffolk, always use the verb to *coy*.

Yet seyde he to hymself upon a nyght,
'Now am I nought a fool, that woot wel how
Her wo for love is of another wight;
And herupon to gon assaye hire nowe,
I may wel wete it nyl not ben my prowe;
For wyse folk in bokes it expresse,
Men shal nought wowe a wight in hevynesse.

'But who so myghte wynnen swich a floure
From hym for whom she mourneth nyght and day,
He myghte seyne he were a conqueroure.'
And right anon, as he that bolde was ay,
Thought in his herte, 'happe how happe may,
Al shold I dye, I wol hire herte seche;
I shal na more lesen but my speche.'

This Dyomede, as bokes us declare,
Was in his nedes prest and corageous,
With sterne vois, and myghty lymes square,
Hardy, testif, strong, and chevalerous
Of dedes, like his fader Tydeus;
And som men seyn he was of tonge large,
And heire he was of Calcidoyn and Arge.[1]

Cryseyde mene[2] was of hire stature;
Therto of shap, of face, and ek of cheere,
Ther myghte be no fairer creature;
And ofte tyme this was hire manere,
To gon ytressed with hire heres clere
Doun by hire coler, at hire back byhynde,
Which with a threde of gold she wolde bynde.

And, save hire browes joyneden yfeere,
Ther nas no lakke in ought I kan espien;
But for to speken of hire eyen clere,

[1] Argos, the town, not the country, is mentioned in the *Iliad*, Book ii., among the possessions of Diomede; Chalcedon is intended for Calydon.

[2] Not *mean* in the modern sense, but moderate—of middle stature.

Loo! trewely they writen that hire seyen,
That Paradys stood formed in hire yen;
And with hire riche beaute everemore
Strof love in hire, ay whiche of hem was moore.

She sobre was, ek symple, and wyse withalle,
The best ynorissed ek that mighte be,
And goodely of hire speche in general,
Charytable, estateliche, lusty, and fre;
No neveremoo ne lakked hire pyte,
Tendre harted, slidynge of corage;
But trewely I kan not telle hire age.

And Troylus wel woxen was in heighte,
And complet formed by proporcioun,
So wel that Kynde it nought amenden myght;
Young, fresshe, strong, and hardy as lyoun;
Trew as steele in ech condicioun;
On of the best enteched creature,
That is or shal, while that the world may dure.

And, certeinly, in story it is yfound,
That Troylus was nevere unto no wight,
As in his tyme, in no degre secounde
In daring-do,[1] that longeth to a knyghte;
Al myght a geaunt passen hym of myght,
His herte ay with the firste and with the beste,
Stode peregal, to dare done that hym leste.

But for to tellen forth of Dyomede:—
It fel, that efter, on that tenthe day
Syn that Cryseyde out of the cite yede,
This Dyomede, as fressh as braunche in May,
Com to the tente ther as Crysseyde lay,
And feyned hym with Calkas han to doon;
But what he mente I shal yow tellen soone.

[1] Daring deeds. Thus Spenser:—

'For ever, who in derring-do were dread,
The lofty verse of hem was lovèd aye.'—*Shep. Kal.*

Cryseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle,
Welcom hym, and doun by hire hym sette,
And he was ethe ynough to maken dwelle;
And efter this, withouten longe lette,
The spices and the wyn men forth hym fette,
And forth they speke of this and that yfeere,
As frendes don, of which som shal ye here.

He gan first fallen of the warre in speech
Betwixen hem and the folk of Troye toun,
And of thassiege he gan eke hire beseech,
To tellen him what was hire opinioun:
Fro that demaunde he so descendeth doun
To axen hire if that hire straunge thought[1]
The Grekis gyse, and werkes that they wroughte?

And whi hire fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hire unto som worthy wight?
Cryseyde, that was in hire peynes stronge,
For love of Troylus, hire owene knyghte,
Als ferforthe as she konnynge hadde or myght,
Answerde hym tho; but, as of his entente,
It semed not she wiste what he mente.

But, natheles, this ilke Dyomede
Gan in hymself asseure, and thus he seyde:—
'If ich arighte have taken of yow hede,
Me thynketh thus, O lady myn Cryseyde!
That, syn I firste hond on youre bridel layde,
Whan ye out com of Troye by the morwe,
Ne koude I nevere sen yow but in sorwe.

'Kan I not seyn what may the cause be,
But if for love of som Troyan it were;
The which right soore wolde athynken me,[2]

---

1 That is, 'If the manners of the Greeks *seemed* strange to her.'—See vol. v. p. 139, note 3.

2 'Which would seem right grievous to me.'

That ye for any wighte that dwelleth there,
Sholden spille a quarter of a teere,
Or pitously youre selven so bygile;
For dredelesse it is nought worth the while.

'The folk of Troye, as who seith alle and some,
In prison ben, as ye youre selven se;
Fro thennes shall not oon on lyve come,
For al the gold atwyxen sonne and se;
Trusteth wel, and understondeth me,
Ther shal not oon to mercy gon on lyve,
Al were he lord of worldes twyes fyve.

'Swich wreche on hem, for fecchyng of Eleyne,
Ther shal ben take, er that we hennes wende,
That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne,[1]
Shal ben agaste that Grekes wol hem shende;
And men shul drede, unto the worldes ende
From hennesforth, to ravysshen any queene,
So cruel shal our wreche on hem be seene.

'And, but if Calkas lede us with ambages,
That is to seyn, with dowble wordes slye,
Swich as men clepe 'a word with two visages,'
Ye shal wel knowen that I nought ne lye,
And al this thynge right sene it with your
And that anoon, ye nyl not trow how soone;
Now taketh hede, for it is for to doone.

---

[1] The Manes were the departed spirits confined in Hades, whether deified or not. Diomede says that so fearful will be the vengeance of the Greeks, that even the infernal deities, the gods of punishment, will fear for themselves. This fine idea is not in the *Filostrato*:—

'Ne crediate che alcun entro là sia
Che pietà trovi in noi in sempiterno;
Paris commise troppo alta follia,
E il Greco onore offese, e perciò eterno
E chiaro exemplo a tutti gl'altri fia,
E a vivi, e trapassati anche in inferno,
La punizion che al rapitor doremo;
E in lui i Troiani tutti puniremo.'

'What? wene ye youre wyse fader wolde
Have yeven Antenor for yow anoon,
If he ne wiste that the cite sholde
Destroied ben? why, nay! So mot I gon!
He knewe ful wel ther shall nat scapen oon
That Troian is; and, for the grete feere,
He dorste not that ye dwelt lenger there.

'What wol ye moore, lufsom lady dere?
Lete Troye and Troian fro youre herte pace;
Dryve oute that bittre hope, and make goode chere,
And clepe ayein the beute of youre face,
That ye with salte teeris so deface;
For Troye is brought in swich a jupartye,
That it to save is now no remedye.

'And thenketh wel, ye shal in Grekes fynde
A moore perfite love, or it be nyght,
Thanne any Troian is, and moore kynde,
And bet to serven yow wol don his myghte;
And, if ye vowchesaufe my lady bryghte,
I wol ben he, to serven yow me selve,
Ye! levere than ben a lord of Grekes twelve.'

And with that worde he gan to wexen rede,
And in his speche a littel while he quooke,
And caste aside a littel with his hede,
And stynt a while; and efterwarde he wooke,
And sobreliche on hire he threw his looke,
And seyde, 'I am, albeit to yow no joye,
As gentil man as any wighte in Troye;'[1]

[1] This stanza is almost a litèral translation from the *Filostrato*:—

'E detto questo diventì vermiglio,
Come foco nel viso, e la favella
Restò tremante, in terra abasso il ciglio,
Ne più osava guardar Griseida bella:
Ma poi, ripreso subito consiglio,
Con piacevol sorriso volto a quella,
Disse: A guardarmi non vi sia di noia,
Ch' io son così gentil come uom di Troia.'

'For if my fader Tydeus,' he seyde,
'Ylived hadde, ich hadde ben or this,
Of Calidoyne[1] and Arge a kyng, Cryseydé;
And so hope I that I shal yit, ywys:
But he was slayne, allas! the moore harme is,
Unhappilye at Thebes al to rathe,
Polymyte,[2] and many a man, to scathe.

'But, herte mine! syn that I am youre man,
And ben the firste of whom I seche grace,
To serve yow as hertely as I kan,
And evere shal, while I to lyve have space,
So, er that I departe out of this place,
Ye wol me graunte that I may, to morwe,
At better leyser, telle yow my sorwe.'

What sholde I telle hise wordes that he seyde?
He spak ynowgh for o day atte meste;
It preveth wel he spak so, that Cryseyde
Graunted, on the morwe, at his requeste,
For to speken with hym, atte leste,
So that he nolde speke of swiche matere;
And thus she to hym seyde, as ye mow here,

Als she that hadde hire herte on Troylus
So faste, that ther may it noone arace;
And straungely she spak, and seyde thus:—
'O Diomede, I love that ilke place
Ther I was borne; and, Joves, for his grace,
Delivere it soone of alle that doth it care!
God, for thi myght, so leve it wel to fare!

'That Grekes wolde hire wrath on Troye wreke,
If that they myght, I know it wel, ywis;
But it schal nought byfallen as ye speke;

---

[1] The printed editions read *Calcidonie*, but *Calidoyn*, which is the reading of MS. 2280, is correct:—

'Di Calidonia e di Argo io saria suto.'

[2] Polynices, the brother of Eteocles, whose usurpation of the crown produced the Theban war, in which Tydeus was slain.

And, God toforne, and ferther over this,
I woot my fader wyse and redy is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So dere I am the more unto hym holde.

'That Grekes ben of heigh condicioun,
I wot ek wel; but, certeine, men shal fynde
Als worthy folk withynne Troye toun,
As konnynge, as perfite, and as kynde,
As ben betwixen Orcades and Inde;
And, that ye koude wele youre lady serve,
I trow ek wel, hire thonke for to desserve.

'But as to speke of love, ywis,' she seyde,
'I had a lord to whom I wedded was,
Hewhos myn herte al was till that he deyde;
And other love, as help me now Pallas!
Ther in myne herte nys, ne nevere was;
And, that ye ben of noble and heigh kynrede,
I have well herde it tellen, out of drede.

'And that doth me to han so grete a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so;[1]
Ek, God woot, love and I ben fer asonder;
I am disposed bet, so mot I go,
Unto my deth to pleyne and maken wo;
What I shal efter done I kan not seye,
But treweliche as yet me liste not pleye.

'Myne herte is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armes bysie day by day;
Herefter whan ye wonnen han the toun,

---

[1] It is curious to observe how Chaucer has in this passage rejected Boccaccio's representation of Cryseyde. Instead of resenting with spirit, as here, Diomede's sudden courtship, Griseida says:—

'Ma questo appunto mi fa ammirazzione
Che tu ponga il pensiera in feminella
Come son io, di poca condizione,
E te conviene un altra Elena bella.

According to the chivalrous ideas of the northern nations, a lady, as such, was felt to be superior to a knight, however exalted his rank.

Paraunter thanne, so it happen may,
That whan I se that I nevere er sey,
Thanne wol I werke that I never er wroghte;
This word to yow ynough suffisen oughte.

'To morwe eke wol I speke with you fayne,
So that ye touchen naught of this matere;
And whan yow liste, ye may come here ageyne,
And er ye gon, thus muche I seye yow here;—
As helpe me Pallas, with hire heres clere,
If that I sholde of any Greeke have routhe,
It sholde be your selven, be my trouthe!

'I sey not therfore that I wol yow love,
Ne sey not nay; but, in conclusioun,
I mene wele, by God that sitt above!'
And therwithal she caste hire eyen down,
And gan to syke, and seyde, 'O Troye toun!
Yet bidde I God, in quiete and in reste
I may yow sen, or do myn herte breste!'

But, in effect, and shortly for to seye,
This Diomede alle fresshly newe ageine
Gan presen on, and fast hire mercy preye;
And efter this, the sothe for to seyne,
Hire glove he toke, of whiche he was ful fayne;
And, finally, whan it was woxen eve,
And alle was well, he roos and tooke his leve.

The brighte Venus folwed and ay taughte
The wey ther brode Phebus doun alight;
And Cynthea[1] hire char hors over raughte,
To whirle out of the Lion, if she myghte;
And Signifer[2] his kandles sheweth brighte,
Whan that Cryseyde unto hire bedde wente,
In-with[3] hire fadres faire bryghte tente.

[1] Cynthia, Diana, or the Moon, so called because she was born on Mount Cynthus.
[2] The sign-bearer, that is, the Zodiac. [3] Within.

Retournynge in hire soule ay up and doun
The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede,
His grete estate, and peril of the town,
And that she was allon, and hadde nede
Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede
The cause whi, the sothe for to telle,
That she tok fully the purpos for to dwelle.

The morwen com, and, gostly[1] for to speke,
This Diomede is com unto Cryseyde;
And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
So wel he for hymself spak and seyde,
That alle her sykes soore adown he layde;
And finally, the sothe for to seyne,
He refte hire the grete of al hire peyne.

And efter this, the storye telleth us,
That she him yaf the faire bay steede,
The whiche she ones wan[2] of Troylus;
And eke a brooch (and that was litel nede)
That Troylus' was, she yaf this Diomede;
And ek the bet from sorw hym to releve,
She made hym were a pensel[3] of hire sleve.

---

[1] The force of this adverb is not obvious. Perhaps the expression means, to speak straight to the ghost, or spirit, without circumlocution.

[2] Wan, or won, may perhaps mean only obtained; or we may suppose that Cryseyde actually won this horse from Troylus in some playful wager.

[3] A pensel means a small streamer, from the French *penoncel*. It was a common custom for a knight to wear, on some conspicuous part of his dress, in battle or in tournaments, some token of the love of his mistress, as a badge of servitude, and to show that he attributed his success to her happy auspices. The celebrated Jaques de Lalain, at his first *pas d'armes*, was not content with one such token. 'Et quant est de son heaume, il avoit au-dessus une trés riche guimple toute bordée et garnie de perles, à franges d'or battants jusques en terre, laquelle lui avoit été envoyée par l'une des deux dames. Et dessus son senestre bras, avoit un moult riche *manche*, où pardessus avoit grand' foison de perles et pierres que la seconde dame lui avoit envoyé par un sien message secret.'—*Chron. de J. de Lalain*, chap. xviii.

I fynde ek in stories elleswhere,
Whan thorugh the body hurt was Dyomede
Of Troylus, tho wepte she many a teere,
When that she saugh hise wyde woundes blede,
And that she toke to kepen hym good hede,
And for to helen hym of his sorwes smerte,
Men seyn, I not, that she yaf hym hire herte.[1]

But, trewelyche, the storye telleth us,
Ther made nevere womman more wo
Than she, when that she falsed Troylus;
She seyde, 'Allas! for now is clene ago
My name in trouthe in love for everemo;
For I have falsed oon the gentileste
That evere was, and oon the worthyeste.

'Allas! of me unto the worldes ende
Shal neither ben ywriten nor ysong
No good worde, for thise bokes wol me shende:
Yrolled schal I ben on many a tonge;
Thorughout the world my belle schal be ronge;
And wommen most wol haten me of alle;
Allas! that swich a cas me sholde falle!

'They wol seyn, in as muche as in me is,
I have hem don dishonour, walaway!
Al be I not the firste that dide amys,
What helpeth that to don my blame away?
But, syn I se ther is no better way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Dyomede algate I wol be trewe.

'But, Troylus, syn I no bettre may,
And syn that thus departen ye and I,
Yet preye I God so yeve yow right good day;[2]

[1] The poet attributes Cryseyde's inconstancy to pity, one of the finest emotions of woman's nature. His object, it will be remembered, is not to represent Cryseyde as a bad specimen of her sex; but rather to show that the stern unchanging character of manly love is not to be expected in a woman, however sincere she may be.

[2] That is, 'good fortune,' as in the French, *bonheur*.

As for the gentileste knight, trewely,
That evere I say, to serven faithfully,
And beste kan ay his ladies honour kepe;'
And with that word she braste anon to wepe.

'And, certes, yow to haten shal I nevere,
And frendes love, that shal ye han of me,
And my good worde, al shold I lyven evere;
And, trewely, I wol right sory be,
For to sen yow in adversite;
And gilteles I wot wel I yow leeve,
And alle shal passe, and thus tak I my leve.'[1]

But, trewely, how longe it was bitweyne,
That she forsoke hym for this Diomede,
Ther is non auctour telleth it, I wene;
Tak every man now to his bokes hede,
He shal no time fynden, out of drede;
For though that he bigan to wowe hire soone,
Er he hire wan, yet was there more to doone.

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
Ferthere thanne the storie wol devyse;
Hire name, allas! is published so wyde,
That for hire gilte it ought ynough suffise;
And if I myght excuse hire any wyse,
For she so sory was for her untrouthe,
Ywis I wold excuse hire yet for routhe.

This Troylus, as I before have tolde,
Thus dryveth forth as wel as he hathe myght;
But ofte was his herte hote and colde,
And namely that ilke nynthe nyght,
Whiche on the morwe she hadde hym behyght

[1] In the *Filostrato*, Griseida, after having given herself to Diomede, is base enough to turn Troilus into ridicule:—

'Griseida intanto, in vergognoso oblio
L'amore e le promesse poste avea,
Era il greco Diomede il suo desio,
Col qual di Troilo spesso si ridea.'

To come ayeyn: God woot, ful litel reste
Hadde he that nyght! nothinge to slepe hym leste.

The laurer-crowned Phebus, with his hete
Gan in his course ay upwarde as he wente,
To warmen of the est se the wawes wete,
And Nysus' doughter[1] song, with fressh entente,
When Troylus his Pandare efter sente;
And on the walles of the town, thei pleyde,
To loke if they kan sen ought of Cryseyde.

Til it was none they stooden for to se
Who that ther com, and every manere wight
That com fro fer, they seyden it was she,
Til that thei kouden knowen hym aright:
Now was his herte dul, now was it light;
And thus bijaped stonden for to stare,
Aboute nought, this Troylus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troylus tho seyde,
'For ought I woot, byfor none, sykerly,
Into this town ne cometh not here Cryseyde;
She hath ynough to doen, hardily,
To wynnen from hire fader, so trow I;
Hire olde fader wol yet make hire dyne
Er that she go, God yeve his herte pyne!'

Pandare answerde, 'It may wel be certeyn,
And forthy lat us dyne, I thee beseche,
And after none than maistow com agein:'
And hom they go, withouten moore speche,
And comen ayein; but longe may they seche,
Er that thei fynde that they efter gape;
Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to jape.

Quod Troylus, 'I se wel now that she
Is taried with hire olde fader so,
That, er she come, it wol neigh even be.

[1] The daughter of Nisus means the lark.—See vol. iv. p. 200, note 6.

Come forth, I wol unto the yate go;
Thise portours ben unkonnynge everemo,
And I wol done hem holden up the yate,[1]
As nought ne were, although she come late.'

The day goth fast, and efter that cometh eve,
And yet com nought to Troylus Cryseyde;
He loketh forth by hegge, by tre, by greve,
And fer his hed over the walle he leyde;
And at the laste he tourned hym, and seyde,
'By God, I wot hire mening now, Pandare!
Almoost ywis al newe is my care.

'Now, douteles, this lady kan hire good;
I wote she meneth riden prively;
I commende hire wysdom, by myn hode!
She wol not maken peple nicely
Gaure on hire when that she commeth; but softely
By nyght into the town she thenketh ride,
And, dere brother, thenke not longe tabide,

'We han nought elles for to don, ywis;
And, Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?
Have here my trouthe, I se hire! yond she is!
Heve up thyn eyen man, maystow not se?'
Pandare answerde, 'Nay, so moot I the!
Al wrong, by God! what seistow man? wher arte?
That I se yond is but a fare cart.'[2]

'Allas! thow saist right soth,' quod Troylus;
'But, hardely, it is not al for nought,
That in myn herte I now rejoysse thus,
It is ayenis som good, I have a thought;
Not I not how, but, sen that I was wroughte,

[1] The gate was in the form of a portcullis, and is therefore said to have been held up.

[2] *A fare cart* appears to mean a forager's cart, or cart for carrying fare, or victuals. The Italian is:—

'No, disse Pandar, se ben gl'occhi sbarro,
Quel che mi mostri è di soldati un carro.'

Ne felt I swich a comfort, dar I seye;
She comth to nyght, my life that dorste I leye!'

Pandare answerde, 'It may be wel ynough,'
And helde with hym of al that ever he seyde,
But in his herte he thought, and softly lough,
And to hymselfe full sobreliche he seyde,
'From hasel woode, ther jolye Robin pleyde,
Shal come al that thow abydest here!
Ye, farwel al the snowgh of ferne yere!'[1]

---

[1] This characteristic use of proverbs or snatches of songs, is no part of Boccaccio's picture of Pandarus. He merely says:—

'Ma Pandaro con se tacitamente
Ridea di ciò che Troilo gli dicea,
Che conoscea manifestamente
La cagion che Griseida ritenea.'

'From hasel woode ther joly Robin pleyde' is probably the first line of an English version of one of the *Pastourelles*, which were popular in Normandy and Bretagne in the thirteenth century, and which, being founded on the infidelity of Marion to Robin, were appropriate to the case of Troylus. The following is a specimen:—

'Lès un pin verdoiant
Trovai l'autr 'ier chantant
Pastore et som pastor:
Cele va lui baisant,
Et cil li acolant
Par joie et par amor.
Tornai m'en un destor;
De veoir lor doçor
Oi faim et grant talant.
Molt grant piéche de jor
Fui illoc assejor
Por veoir lor samblant.
Cele disait: 'O. a co.'
Et Robin disait: 'Dorenlot.'

'Grant piéche fui ensi
Car forment m'abelli
Lor gieus à esgarder;
Tant ke jo départi,
Vi de li son ami
Et ens el bois entrer.
Lors eue talant d'aler
Vers li pour saluer;
Si m'assis delés li,
Pris le a aparler,

The wardeyn of the yates gan to calle
The folk, which that withoute the yates were,
And bad hem dryven in hire bestes alle

S'amor à demander ;
Mais mot ne repondi,
Ancois disoit : ' O. a eo.'
Et Robin disoit : ' Dorenlot.'

' Tose, je vos requier
Dones-moi un baisier,
Se ce non, je morrai ;
Bien mi poes laissier
Morir sans recovrier,
Se jou le baisier n'ai.
Sor sains vos juerrai,
Ja mal ne vos querrai
Ne forcheur destorbier.'
' Vassal, et je l'ferrai
Trois fois vos baiserai
Por vos resohaigier.'
Ele dist : ' O. a eo.'
Et Robin disoit : ' Dorenlot.'

' A cest mot plus ne dis,
Entre mes bras le pris,
Baisai le estroitement :
Mais au conter m'espris,
Por les trois em pris six.
En riant ele dist,
' Vassal, a vos creant
Ai-ge fait largement
Plus ke ne vos promis ?
Or vos proie boinemant
Ke me tenés covant
Si ne me queres pis.'
Cele redist : ' O. a eo.'
Et Robin el bos : ' Dorenlot.''

The loves of Robin and Marion form the subject of one of the plays in M. Francisque Michel's *Théâtre Français du moyen âge*. It is entitled *Li Gieu de Robin et de Marion*. In *Twelfth Night* the clown sings a snatch of one of these Pastorals :—

' Hey Robin, jolly Robin,
Tell me how thy lady doth.
My lady is unkind, perdy.
Alas why is she so ?
She loves another.'—Act iv. sc. 2.

Maid Marian, the *Marion* of the French *Pastourelle*, also figures in the morris-dances of the sixteenth century. ' Farewel al the snowe of ferne yere,' is probably a line from some popular ballad, in which the transitoriness of woman's love is compared to last year's snow.

Or all the nyght they moste bleven there;
And fer withinne the nyght, with many a teere,
This Troylus gan homwarde for to ride,
For wel he seth it helpeth nought tabide.

But, natheles, he gladded hym in this,
He thoughte he mysacompted hadde his day,
And seyde, 'I understonde have al amys,
For thilke nyght I laste Cryseyde seye,
She seyde, 'I shal ben here, if that I may,
Er that the moone, O dere herte swete,
The Leon passe oute of this Ariete;'[1]

'For which she may yet holde al hire beheste.'
And on the morwe unto the yate he wente,
And up and down, by weste and ek by este,
Upon the walles made he many a wente;
But al for nought; his hope alwey hym blente;
For which at nyght, in sorwe and sike sore,
He wente hym home, withouten any more.

This hope al clene out of his herte fledde,
He nath wheron now lenger for to honge;
But, for the peyne, hym thought his herte bledde,
So were his throwes sharpe, and wonder stronge;
For, when he saugh that she aboode so longe,
He niste what he juggen of it myghte,
Syn she hath broken that she hym byhighte.

The thridde, ferthe, fyfte, sexte day
After tho dayes ten, of whiche I told,
Betwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet somwhat trusten on hire hestes olde;
But, when he saugh she nolde hire terme holde,
He kan now sen non other remedye,
But for to shape hym sone for to dye.

Therwith the wykked spirit, God us blesse!
Which that men clepeth wode jalousie,
Gan in hym crepe, in al this hevynesse;

[1] See vol. v. p. 233, note 2.

For whiche, because he wolde soone dye,
He ne ete ne dranke for his melencolye,
And ek from every companye he fledde;
This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde.

He so defeit was, that no maner man,
Unneth hym myght knowen there he wente;
So was he lene, and therto pale and wan,
And feble, that he walketh by potente,
And with his ire he thus hymselven shente:
But who so axed hym whereof hym smerte,
He seyde, his harme was al aboute his herte.

Priam ful ofte, and ek his moder deere,
His bretheren, and his sustren gonne hym freyne
Whi he so sorwful was in al his cheere,
And what thyng was the cause of al his peyne?
But al for nought; he nolde his cause pleyne;
But seyde, he felte a grevous maladye
Aboute his herte, and fayne he wolde dye.

So, on a day, he layde hym down to slepe;
And so byfel, that in slepe hym thoughte,
That in a forest faste he welke to wepe,
For love of hire that hym thise peynes wroughte;
And, up and doun as he that forest soughte,
He mette he saugh a boore, with tuskes grete,
That slepte ayein the brighte sonnes hete.

And by this boore, fast in hire armes folde,
Lay kyssing ay his lady bright Cryseyde;
For sorwe of which, whan he it gan biholde,
And for despit, out of his slepe he breyde,
And loude he cried on Pandarus, and seyde,
'O Pandarus, now know I, crope and roote!
I nam but ded, there is non other boote!

'My lady bryghte, Cryseyde, hath me bytrayed,
In whom I trusted moost of any wighte;
She elleswhere hath now hire herte apeyde;

The blisful goddes, thorwgh hire grete myghte,
Han in my dreme yshewed it ful righte;
Thus, in my dreme, Cryseyde have I biholde;'
And al this thinge to Pandarus he tolde.

'O my Cryseyde, allas! what subtilte?
What newe lust? what beute? what science?
What wrathe, of juste cause, have ye to me?
What guilte of me? what fel experience
Hath fro me rafte, allas! thyn advertence?
O trust, O feith, O depe asseuraunce!
Who hath me raft Cryseyde, al my plesaunce?

'Allas! why lette ich yow from hennes go?
For which wel neigh out of my wit I breyde;
Who shal now trowe on any othes moo?
God woot I wende, O lady bright Cryseyde,
That every word was gospel that ye seyde!
But who may beste bigile, if hym liste,
Than he on whom men weneth best to triste?

'What shall I don, my Pandarus, allas?
I fele nowe so sharpe a newe peyne,
Syn that ther is no remedye in this cas,
That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne
My selven slewe, than alway thus to pleyne;
For thorwgh the deth my wo shold have an ende,
Ther[1] every day with lif my self I shende.'

Pandare answerde and seyde, 'Allas, the while
That I was born! have I not seyde or this,
That dremes many a maner man bigile?
And whi? For folk expounden hem amys:
How darstow saine that fals thy lady is,
For any dreme, right for thine owen drede?
Lat be this thought, thow kanst no dremes rede.

[1] *Ther* has the force of *whereas* in this place. In the *Filostrato* Troilo actually takes up a knife to stab himself. The difference is characteristic of the distinction between the national characters of the English and Italians.

'Paraunter ther thow dremest of this boore,
It may so be that it may signifye
Hire fader, whiche that old is, and ek hoore,
Ayein the sonne lyth o' poynte to dye;
And she for sorwe gynneth wepe and crye,
And kisseth hym, ther he lyth on the grounde;
Thus sholdestow thy dreme aright expounde.'

'How might I then don,' quod Troylus,
'To know of this, ye, were it nevere so lite?'
'Now seyestow wisely,' quod this Pandarus;
'My rede is this, syn thow kanst wel endite,
That hastily a lettre thou hire write,
Thorugh whiche thow shalt wel bryngen it aboute
To knowe a soth of that thow ert in doute.

'And se now why: for this dar I wel seyn,
That if so is, that she untrewe be,
I kannot trowen that she wol write ayein;
And if she write, thow shalt ful soone ysee,
As whether she hath any liberte
To come ayein; or elles in som clause
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.

'Thow hast not writen to hire syn that she wente,
Nor she to the; and this I dorste laye,
Ther may swich cause ben in hire entente,
That, hardily, thow wolt thy selven seye,
That hire abood the best is for yow tweye:
Now write hire than, and thow shalt fele soone
A sothe of al; ther is na moore to doone.'

Acorded ben to this conclusioun,
And that anon, thise ilke lords two;
And hastily sit Troylus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,
How he may best descryven hire his wo;
And to Cryseyde, his owen lady deere,
He wrote right thus, and seyde as ye may here.

THE COPY OF THE LETTER.

'RIGHT fresshe floure! whos I have ben and shal,
Withouten part of ellesewhere servyse, ..
With herte, body, lyfe, lust, thought, and alle!
I, woful wight, in everych humble wyse
That tonge telle, or herte may devyse,
As oft as matere occupieth place,
Me recommaunde unto youre noble grace.

'Liketh it you to wyten, sweete herte,
As ye wel knowe, how longe tyme agon
That ye me left in aspre peynes smerte,
When that ye wente, of which yet boote non
Have I non had, but evere wors bigon
Fro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle,
While it yow liste, of wele and wo my welle!'

'For which to yow, with dredeful herte trewe,
I write (as he that sorwe drifth to write)
My wo, that every houre encresseth newe,
Compleynynge as I dar, or kan endite;
And that defaced is, that may ye wite,
With teres, which that fro myn eyen reyne;
They wolden speke, if that they koude, and pleyne.

'Yow first beseche I, that youre eyen clere,
To look on this defouled, ye nat holde:
And over al this, that ye, my lady dere,
Wol vouchesaufe this lettre to beholde;
And by the cause ek of my cares colde,
That sleth my wit, if ought amys mastart,
Foryeve it me, myn owen swete herte.[2]

'If any servaunt durst, or ought, of ryght
Upon hys lady pitously compleyne,
Than wene I that I ought to be that whyght;

[1] That is, 'Thou well-spring of my joy and sorrow.'
[2] A leaf has been here torn out of the Harl. MS. 2280, and the following twelve stanzas are therefore taken from MS. 1239.

Considred thys, that ye thys monethes tweyne
Han taryed, there ye seyde, sothe to seyne,
But dayes ten ye nolde in hoste sojourne;
But in two monethes yit ye not retourne.

'And, for as moche as me mote nedys lyke
Alle that you lust, I dar not pleyne more,
But humbly, wyth sorowful sykes syke,
You write I myn unresty sorowes sore;
Fro day to day, desiring evermore
To knowen fully, yif your wille it were,
How ye han ferde and don while ye ben there.

'The whos welfare and hele eke God encrece
In honour suche, that upward in degre
Hit grow alway, soo that it never cese,
Ryght as your hert can ay, my lady fre,
Devise, I prey to God so mote it be,
And graunt it, soone that ye upon me rewe,
As wisly as in al I am to you trewe.

'And yf it lyke yow knowen of the fare
Of me, whos woo ther may no wyght discryve,
I can no more, but, cheste of every care,
At wrytyng of thys lettre I was on lyve,
Al redy oute my wooful gost to dryve;
Whych I delay, and holde hym yit in honde,
Upon the syght of matere of your sonde.[1]

'Myn eyen twoo, in veyne wyth whych I see,
Of sorowfule terys salte arn woxen welles;
My songe, in pleynt of myn adversite,
My good, in harme, myn ese eke woxen helle is,
My joye in wo; I can sey you nought ellys,
But tournede is, for whych my lyf I warye,
Every joye or ese in hys contrarie.[2]

[1] That is, 'Until I may see such matter as you may send me.'

[2] Chaucer, it will be observed, is fond of antithesis. In the *Filostrato* there is nothing analogous to this stanza; nor is the letter nearly so tender or impassioned.

'Whych with your comyng hom ayen to Troye
Ye may redresse, and, more a thousand sithe,
Than ever I hade, encrecen in me joye;
For was ther never herte yit so blithe
To save hys lyf, as I shal ben as swyth
As I you see; and though no maner routhe
Can meven you, yet thenketh on your trouthe.

'And yif so be my gilt deth have deserved,
Or yf you lust no more upon me se,
In guerdon yit of that I have you served,
Beseech I you, myn owne lady fre,
That hereupon ye wolde write me,
For love of Gode, my ryghte lodesterre,
That dethe may make an ende of al my werre.

'If other cause aught dothe you for to dwelle,
Than with your lettre ye may me reconforte;
For though to me your absence is an helle,
Wyth pacience I wyl my woo conforte,
And with your lettre of hope I wyl disporte:
Now writeth, swete, and lat me thus nat pleyne;
Wyth hope, or dethe, delivereth me from peyne.

'Ywis, myn owne dere herte trewe,
I wote that whan ye next upon me se,
So lost have I myn hele and eke myn hewe,
Cryseyde shal not conne knowe me;
Ywis, myn hertes day, my lady fre,
Soo thrusteth ay myn herte to beholde
Your beaute, that unnethe my lyf I holde.

'I sey no more, al have I for to sey
To you wel more than I tellen may;
But whethyr that ye do me lyve or dey,
Yit prey I Gode so yeve you ryght gode day;[1]
And fareth wel, godely feyre fresshe may,
As she that lyf or deth me may commaunde,
And to your trouthe ay I me recommaunde.

[1] See *ante*, p. 24, note 2.

'Wyth hele swych, but that ye yeven me
The same hele, I shal noon hele have;
In you lieth, whan ye list that it so be,
The day in wyche me clothen shal my grave;
In you my lyf, in your myght for to save
Me fro disese of alle my peynes smerte;
And fare now wele, myn owne swete herte!
'Le vostre T.'[1]

Thys lettre forth was sent unto Cryseyde,
Of wych hir answere in effect was this:—
Ful pitously she wrote ayen, and seyde,
That al so sone as she myght ywys,
She wolde come, and mende that was amys;
And finally, she wrote hym and seyde thanne,
She wolde come, ye, but she nyste whanne.

But in hire lettre made she swiche feeste,[2]
That wonder was, and swerthe she loveth hym beste,
Of which he fonde but botmeles biheste.
But, Troylus, thou mayst now, este or weste,
Pipe in an ivy leefe,[3] if that the leste.
Thus goth the world; God shilde us fro meschaunce,
And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!

Encressen gan the wo fro day to nyght
Of Troylus, for taryinge of Cryseyde;
And lessen gan his hope and ek his myght,
For which al doun he in his bed hym leyde;
He ne ete, ne dronk, ne slepe, ne worde seyde,
Imagynyng ay that she was unkynde,
For which wel neigh he wex out of his mynde.

This dreme, of which I told have ek beforne,
May nevere come out of his remembraunce;
He thought ay wel he had his lady lorne,
And that Joves, of his purveyaunce,
Hym shewed hadde in slepe the signifiaunce

[1] *Le vostre T.* is omitted in MS. 1239; but as it is given in all the printed editions, it is here retained.
[2] Here MS. 2280 is resumed.
[3] See vol. i. p. 147, note 1.

Of hire untrouth, and his disaventure,
And that the boore was shewed hym in figure.

For which he for sibille[1] his suster sente,
That called was Cassandre[2] al aboute,
And al his dreme he told hire or he stente,
And hire bysought assoylen hym the doute
Of the stronge boore, with tuskes stoute;
And finaly, withinne a litel stounde,
Cassandre bygan right thus his dreme expounde.

She gan first smyle, and seyde, 'Brother dere,
If thow a soth of this desirest knowe,
Thow most a fewe of olde stories here,
To purpos how that fortune overthrowe
Hath lordes olde, thorwgh which withinne a throwe
Thow wel this boore shalt know, and of what kynde
He comen is, as men in bokes fynde.

'Diane, which that wroth was and in ire,
For Grekes nolde don hire sacrifise,
Ne incens upon her auter sette a fire,
So, for that Greekes gonne hire so despise,
Wrak hire in a wonder crwel wyse;
For, with a boore, as grete as ox in stalle,
She made up frete hire corne and vynes alle.

'To sle this boore was al the country raysed,[3]
Emanges which ther com this boore to se
A maide, on of this worlde the best ypreysed;
And Meleager, lorde of that countre,
He loved so this fresshe mayden fre,

[1] Sibille is not here a proper name, but is used to denote a prophetess in general.

[2] Cassandra was endowed with the gift of prophecy by Apollo, who, in revenge for her disdain, added the condition that she should never be believed. In the *Filostrato* Cassandra is not sent for, but comes with Hecuba, Helen, and Troylus's other female relations to comfort him.

[3] 'To raise the country' is still a common expression among the Irish peasantry, meaning to alarm and assemble the inhabitants of a district.

That with his manhode, or he wolde stente,
This boore he slough, and hire the hed he sente.

'Of whiche, as olde bokes tellen us,
Ther roos a contek and a grete envye;
And of this lorde descended Tideus
By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye:
But how this Meleager gan to dye
Thorwgh his moder, wol I yow nought telle,
For al to longe it were for to dwelle.'

She tolde ek how Tideus, or she stente,
Unto the stronge cite of Thebes,
To cleymen kyngdom of the cite, wente,
For his felawe daun Polimytes,[1]
Of whiche the brother daun Ethiocles[2]
Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the strengthe.
This told she by processe al by lengthe.

She told ek how Hemonydes asterte,
When Tideus slough fifty knyghtes stoute;
She told ek al the prophecies by herte,
And how that seven kynges with hire route
Besegeden the cite alle aboute;
And of the holy serpent, and the welle,
And of the furies alle she gan hym telle.

Associat profugum Tideus primo Polymytem,
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque secundas;
Tercius Hemoniden canit, et vates latitantes,
Quartus habet reges ineuntes prœlia septem;
Mox furie quinto narrantur et anguis,
Archimori bustum sexto ludusque leguntur.
Dat Grayos Thebes et vatem septimus umbris,
Octavo cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgis;
Ypomedon nono moritur cum Parthonopeo,
Fulmine percussus decimo Capeneus superatur,

[1] Polynices. [2] Eteocles.

Undecimo sese perimunt per vulnera fratres,
Argiva flentem, narrat duodenus et ignem.[1]

Of Archinoris buryinge, and the pleyes,
And how Amphiorax fil thorwgh the grounde,
How Tideus was slayn, lord of Argeyes,
And how Ypomedon in litel stounde
Was dreynt, and dyed Parthonope of wounde;
And also how Capaneus the proude
With thunder dynt was slayn, that cried loude.

She gan ek telle hym how that either brother,
Ethiocles and Polymyte also,
At a scarmyche ech of them slough other,
And of Argyves wepynge and hire wo,
And how the town was brente she told ek tho;
And so descendeth doun from gestes olde
To Diomede, and thus she spak and tolde.

'This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede,
Tideus sone, that doun descended is
Fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede;
And thy lady, wher so sche be, ywis,
This Dyomede hire herte hath, and she is his:
Wepe if thow wolt, or lefe, for out of doute
This Diomede is ynne, and thow ert oute.'

'Thow sayst nat soth,' quod he, 'thow sorceresse!
With al thi fals goost of prophecie!
Thow wenest ben a grete devineresse!
Now sestow how this fool of fantasie,
Peyneth hire on ladyes for to lye?
Awey!' quod he, 'ther Joves yeve the sorwe!
Thow shalt be fals peraunter yet to morwe!

'Als wel thow myghtest lyen on Alceste,
That was of creatures (but men lie)[2]
That ever weren, kyndest, and the beste;

[1] This is a metrical argument of the twelve books of the *Thebais* of Statius. It is not given in the *Filostrato*.

[2] Troylus, by saying that men lie in calling Alceste the kindest and the best, means to insinuate that Cryseyde is kinder and better than she.

For when hire housbonde was in jupartye
To dye hymself, but if she wolde dye,
Sho ches for hym to dye, and gon to helle,
And starf anon, as us the bokes telle.'

Cassandre goth, and he, with cruel herte,
Foryat his wo for angre of hire speche;
And from his bed al sodeynly he sterte,
As though al hool hym hadde ymade a leche;
And day by day he gan enquire and seche
A soth of this, with al his fulle cure,
And thus he driveth forth his aventure.

Fortune, which that permutacioun
Of thinges hath, as it is hire committed,
Thorwgh purveyaunce and disposicioun
Of heigh Jove, as regnes shal ben flitted
Fro folk to folk, or when they shal ben smitted,
Gan pulle awey the fetheres bright of Troie,
Fro day to day, til they ben bare of joie.

Amange al this, the fyne of the parodye[1]
Of Ector gan approchen[2] wonder blyve;
The fate wold his soule shold unbodye,
And shapen hadde a mene it out to dryve,
Ayeins which fate hym helpeth not to stryve;
But, on a day, to fighten gan he wende,
At which, allas! he caughte his lyves ende.

For which me thenketh every manere wight
That haunteth armes oughte to bewayle
The deth of hym that was so noble a knyght:

[1] A gloss in the margin explains *parodye* to mean *duracioun*. It is derived from παρόδος, a way or road past any thing—a passage, and might therefore mean Hector's passage out of this world. It was used technically, however, for the first appearance of the chorus in the orchestra, and there seems to have been a confusion in the poet's mind between this word and μετάστασις, which signified their departure, and which would have been the proper word here. *Parody*, in the modern sense, has quite a different derivation.

[2] The reading of MS. 1239 has been here adopted in preference to *a prophecy*, that of MS. 2280, as the latter makes no sense.

For, as he drough a kynge by th' avantaille,
Unware of this, Achilles, thorwgh the maylle,
And thorwgh the body, gan hym for to ryve;
And thus the worthy knyght was reft of lyve.[1]

For whom, as old bokes tellen us,
Was made swich wo, that tonge it may nat telle;
And namely, the sorwe of Troylus,
That next hym was of worthinesse welle;
And in this wo gan Troylus to dwelle,
That, what for sorwe, and love, and for unreste,
Ful oft a day he bad his herte breste.

But, natheles, though he gan hym despaire,
And drede ay that his lady was untrewe,
Yet ay on hire his herte gan repaire,
And, as thise lovers don, he sought ay newe
To gete ayein Cryseyde, brighte of hewe;
And in his herte he wente hire excusynge,
That Calkas caused alle hire taryinge.

And oft tyme he was in purpos grete,
Hymselven like a pilgrym[2] to degyse,
To sen hire; but he may not counterfete,
To ben unknowen of folk that weren wyse,
Ne fynde excuse aright that may suffise,

---

[1] In the *Iliad* Hector is slain in fair fight; but the British writers, deriving the origin of their nation from Brutus, and through him from the Trojan fugitives, evince a general desire to exalt the Trojans at the expense of the Greeks. This communicated itself to the English generally. Thus in *The House of Fame*:—

'One saied that Omere made lies
And feigning in his poetries;
And was to the Grekes favorable,
And therfor held he it but fable.'

Lydgate also, in his *Troye-Boke*, blames Homer for favouring the Greeks.

[2] This idea is quite mediæval in its character. There are many stories told in the histories and romances of the middle ages of warriors penetrating the camp of their enemies, in the disguise of pilgrims or minstrels. Every one will recollect King Alfred's adventure of this kind.

If he amange the Grekes knowen were;
For whiche he wept ful oft and many a tere.

To hire he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe,
Ful pitously, he left it nought for slouthe,
Besechynge hire, syn that he was trewe,
That she wol come ayein, and hold hire trouthe;
For which Cryseyde, upon a day, for routhe,
I take it so, touchynge al this matere,
Wroot hym ayein, and seyde as ye may here.

'Cupides sone, ensaumple of goodlyhede,
O swerde of knyghthod, sours of gentilesse,
How myght a wight in tormente and in drede,
And heleles, yow sende as yet gladnesse?
I herteles, I sik, I in destresse,
Syn ye with me, nor I with yow may dele,
Yow neither sende iche herte may, nor hele.

'Your lettres ful, the papir al ypleynted,
Conceyved hath mine hertes pite;
I have ek seyn, with teeris alle depeynted,[1]
Your lettre, and how that ye requeren me
To come ayein; which yet ne may not be;
But whi, leste that this lettre founden were,
No mencion ne make I nowe for fere.

'Grevous to me, God woot, is youre unreste,
Youre haste, and that the Goddes ordinaunce
It semeth nat ye take it for the beste;
Nor other thyng nys in youre remembraunce,
As thenketh me, but oonly youre pleasaunce;
But beth not wroth, and that I yow beseche,
For that I tarye is al for wicked speche.

'For I have herde wel more than I wende
Touchynge us two, how thynges han ystonde,
Whiche I shal with dissimulynge amende;

[1] See vol. v. p. 92, note 2.

And, beth not wroth, I have ek understonde,
How ye ne don but holden me in honde;
But now no fors, I kan not in yow gesse,
But alle trouthe and alle gentilesse.

'Come I wole, but yet in swich disjoynte
I stonde as now, that what yere or what day
That this shal be, that kan I nought apoynte;
But in effect I preye yow, as I may,
Of your good word, and of youre frendschip ay;
For trewely while that my lif may dure,
As for a frend, ye may in me assure.

'Yet preye I yow, on evyl ye ne take[1]
That it is short which that I to yow write;
I dar not, ther I am, wèle lettres make,
Ne nevere yet ne koude I wel endite;
Ek grete effect, men write in place lite,
The entent is alle, and not the lettres space;
And fareth now wel, God have you in his grace!
'La vostre C.'

This Troylus this lettre thought al straunge,
Whan he it saugh, and sorwfullyche he sighte;
Hym thought it like a kalendes of chaunge;[2]
But, finaly, he ful ne trowen myghte,
That she ne wold hym holden that she hyghte;
For with ful yvel wil list hym to leve,
That loveth wel, in swiche cas, though hym greve.

But, natheles, men seyn that, at the laste,
For any thyng, men shal the sothe see;
And swich a cas beted, and that as faste,
That Troylus wel understood that she
Nas not so kynde as that hire oughte be;

[1] MS. 2280 reads *an yvel ye it take*, which does not make sense with the context; the reading of MS. 1239 has therefore been adopted.

[2] See vol. v. p. 55, note 1. The meaning is, that as the kalends are the first of a new month, and are accompanied, as was supposed, by a change of weather, so this letter betokened a change in Cryseyde's mind.

And, finaly, he woot now out of doute,
That al is lost that he hath ben aboute.

Stood on a day in his malencolye
This Troylus, and in suspicioun
Of hire, for whom he wende for to dye;
And so bifel, that thorwghout Troie town,
As was the guyse, yborn was up and down
A manere cote armure, as seith the storie,
Beforn Deiphebe, in signe of his victorie.

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,[1]
Deiphebe it hadde rent fro Diomede
The same day; and when this Troylus
It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avysynge of the lengthe and of the brede,
And al the werke; but, as he gan biholde,
Ful sodeynli his herte gan to colde,

As he that on the coler fonde withinne
A broche, that he Cryseyde yaf that morwe
That she from Troie moste nedes twynne,
In remembraunce of hym, and of his sorwe;
And she hym layde ayein hire feith to borwe,
To kepe it ay; but now ful wel he wiste,
His lady nas no longer on to triste.[2]

He goth hym hom, and gan ful soone sende
For Pandarus; and al this newe chaunce,
And of this broche, he told hym word and ende,
Compleynynge of hire herte variaunce,
His longe love, his trouth, and his pennaunce;
And efter Deth, withouten wordes moore,
Ful fast he cried, his rest hym to restoore.

Than spak he thus:—'O, lady myn Cryseyde,
Wher is youre feith, and wher is youre beheste?
Wher is youre love, wher is youre trouth?' he seyde,

[1] See Introduction, vol. v. p. 10.
[2] That is, 'He knew that his lady was no longer to be trusted on.'

'Of Diomede have ye now al this feste!
Allas! I wold han trowed at the leste,
That, syn ye nold in trouthe to me stonde,
That ye thus nolde han holden me in honde.

'Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
Allas! I nevere wold han wende, or this,
That ye, Cryseyde, koude han chaunged so,
Ne but I hadde agilt, and don amys;
So cruel wende I nought youre herte, ywis,
To sle me thus! allas! youre name of trouthe
Is now fordon, and that is al my routhe.

'Was ther non other broche yow liste lete,
To feffe[1] with youre newe love,' quod he,
'But thilke broche that I, with teris wete,
Yow yaf, as for a remembraunce of me?
Non other cause, allas! ne hadde ye,
But for despit; and ek for that ye mente
Al outrely to shewen youre entente.

'Thorwgh which I se, that clene out of youre mynde
Ye han me caste, and I ne kan nor may
For al this world withinne myn herte fynde,
To unloven yow a quarter of a day;[2]
In cursed tyme I borne was, walawey!
That yow, that dothe me al this wo endure,
Yet love I best of any creature.

'Now God,' quod he, 'me sende yet the grace,
That I may meten with this Diomede!
And trewely, if I have myghte and space,
Yet shal I make, I hope, his sides blede:
O God!' quod he, 'that oughtest taken hede

[1] To *feffe* means to *enfeoff*, or to put into possession in fee simple.—See vol. iv. p. 165, note 1. This ceremony consisted in giving into the hands of the feoffee a turf, or door-key, or something belonging to the land or tenement, to which ceremony Troylus compares Cryseyde's giving Diomede this brooch.

[2] The exquisite pathos of this address of Troylus to his absent mistress is Chaucer's own. In the *Filostrato* Troilo calls on Jove to punish her with his thunderbolts.

To ferthren trouthe, and wronges to punice,
Whi nyltow don a vengeaunce of this vice?

'O Pandarus, that in dremes for to triste
Me blamed hast, and wonte oft ert upbreyde,
Now maistow sen thi self, if that the liste,
How trew is now thi nece, bright Cryseyde!
In sondry formes, God it woot!' he seyde,
'The goddes shewen bothe joye and teene
In slepe; and by my dreme it is now sene.

'And certeinly, withouten more speche,
From hennesforth, as ferforth as I may,
Myn owen deth in armes wol I seche;—
I recche nat how sone be the day;
But trewely, Cryseyde, swete may,
Whom I have ay with al my myght iserved,
That ye thus don, I have it not deserved.'

This Pandarus, that al thise thynges herde,
And wiste wel he seyde a soth of this,
He nought a word ayein to hym answarde,
For sory of his frendes sorwe he is,
And shamed for his nece hath don amys;
And stont astonied of thise causes tweye,
As stille as stone; o word ne koude not seye.

But, at the laste, thus he spak and seyde,
'My brother dere, I may do the na more;
What shold I seyn? I hate, ywis, Cryseyde!
And, God woot, I wol hate hire everemore:
And that thow me bisoughtest don of yore,
Havynge unto myn honour, ne my reste,
Right no rewarde, I dide al that the leste.

'If I dide ought that myghte lyken the,
It is me liefe;[1] and of this treson now,
God woot that it a sorrwe is unto me;
And, dredeles, for hertes ese of yow,
Right faine I wolde amende it, wiste I how:

[1] That is, 'It is pleasing to me—I am glad of it.'

And fro this worlde, Almighty God I preye,
Deliver hire soone! I kan na more seye.'

Grete was the sorwe and pleynte of Troylus;
But forth hire cours fortune ay gan to holde;
Cryseyde loveth the sone of Tydeus,
And Troylus mot wepe in cares colde.
Swich is this world, who so it kan biholde!
In ech estat is litel hertes reste!
God lene us for to take it for the beste!

In many cruel battaille, out of drede,
Of Troylus, this ilke noble knyght,
(As men may in thise olde bokes rede)
Was seen his knyghthod and his grete myghte;
And, dredeles, his ire day and nyghte,
Ful cruely the Grekes ay aboughte,
And alwey moost this Diomede, he soughte.

And ofte tyme I fynde that they mette
With blody strokes, and with wordes grete,
Assaying how hire speres weren whette;
And, God it woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troylus upon his helm to bete;
But, natheles, Fortune it nought ne wolde,
Of otheres honde that either dyen sholde.

And if I hadde taken for to write
The armes of this ilke worthi man,
Than wold ich of his battailles endite;
But for that I to writen first bygan
Of his love, I have seyde as I can.
His worthy dedes, who so lest hem here,
Rede Dares; he kan telle hem alle yfere.

Beseechynge every lady bright of hewe,
And every gentil womman, what she be,
That al be that Cryseyde was untrewe,
That for that gilt she be not wroth with me.
Ye may hire gilt in otheres bokes se,

And gladder I wol write, if yow leste,
Penelopes trouthe, and good Alceste.

Ne I sey nat this al only for thise men,
But moost for wommen that betraised be
Thorwgh fals folk, (God yeve hem sorwe, amen!)
That with hire grete wit and subtilite
Betraise yow: and this commeveth me
To speke; and in effect yow alle I preye
Beth war of men, and herkeneth what I seye.

Go, litel boke, go, litel myn tregedie!
Ther God my maker, yet er that I dye,
So sende me myght to maken som comedye!
But, litel booke, no makynge thow nenvye,[1]
But subgect be to alle poesie,
And kysse the steppes, wheras thow seest space,
Of Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

And, for ther is so grete dyversite
In Englissh, and in writynge of our tonge,
So preye I to God, that non myswrite the,
Ne the mys-metere, for defaute of tonge!
And red wher so thow be, or elles songe,[2]

---

[1] That is, 'Do not envy any other poetry.' The mediæval terms *maker*, and *making*, are strictly analogous to the Greek ποιητής and ποίημα, or ποίησις.

[2] There can be no doubt that all poetry, even to so late a period as the middle ages, was sometimes sung, like the *Iliad*, to a musical accompaniment. The melodies used for this purpose were founded upon the scales, or tones, which were derived from the Greeks, and to which St. Ambrose and St. Gregory adapted the hymns of the church. These are varied in their expression, some joyful, some plaintive, and some triumphant; and the reciter no doubt changed them according to the changes in the character of his subject, as in the Ambrosian *Te Deum*, in which several different tones are used. No one for a moment doubts that *modern* music is infinitely superior, as a science, to these rude melodies; but experience shows that, as music becomes more refined, it becomes less adapted for a vehicle for poetry. The melodies which are called national, because still surviving among the *people* of the several nations to which they are peculiar, are founded upon the same scales, or systems of sound, as these ancient tones, and are still found to be best suited for conveying the ideas of the poet.

That thow be understonde, God I beseche!
But yet to purpos of my rather speche.

The wrath, as I bigan yow for to seye,
Of Troylus, the Grekes boughten deere;
For thousandes his hondes maden dye,
As he that was withouten any peere,
Save Ector in his tyme, as I kan here;
But, walawey! save only Goddes wille,
Dispitously hym slough the fiers Achille.

And when that he was slayn in this manere,
His light gost ful blisfully is wente
Up to the holughnesse of the seventhe spere,
In convers letynge everyche elemente;[1]
And ther he saugh, with ful avysemente,
The erratyk sterres, herkenynge armonye,
With sownes ful of hevenysch melodie.

And down from thennes faste he gan avyse
This litel spot of erth, that with the se
Embraced is; and fully gan despise
This wreched world, and helde al vanyte,
To respect of the pleyne felicite
That is in hevene above: and, at the laste,
Ther he was slayn his lokynge down he caste.

And in hymself he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste,
And dampned al our werk that folweth so
The blynde luste, the whiche that may not laste,
And sholden al our herte on hevene caste;

[1] 'In convers leting every element,' means, 'Leaving behind him all the elements, earth, air, fire, and water, of which is composed this world with its atmosphere, which now appears to him convex, or in the form of a ball.' The soul of Troylus passes from the earth, which is the first sphere, and in respect of which the others are concave, or *hollow*, and reaches the seventh, in respect of which the others are convex, or *convers*. This doctrine of the spheres, and the harmony they produce, has been already explained.—See vol. iv. p. 190, note 3. It seems to have been universally received. St. Paul speaks of being 'caught up to the third heaven.'—2 Cor. xii. 2.

And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurie sorted hym to dwelle.[1]

Swich fyn hath, lo! this Troylus for love!
Swich fyn hath al his grete worthynesse!
Swich fyn hath his estat real above!
Swich fyn his luste, swich fyn hath his noblesse!
Swich fyn hath fals worldes brotelnesse!
And thus bigan his lovynge of Cryseyde,
As I have tolde, and in this wise he deyde.

O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with youre age,
Repeireth hom fro worldly vanyte,
And of youre herte up casteth the visage
To thilke God, that efter his ymage
Yow made, and thynketh al nys but a faire,
This worlde that passeth sone, as floures faire.[2]

And loveth hym the which that, right for love,
Upon a crois, oure soules for to beye,
First starf and roos, and sitt in heven above,
For he nyl falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte alle holly on hym leye;
And syn he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?

---

[1] The fine idea of making the soul of Troylus mount to the seventh heaven, and laugh at its former transitory joys and sorrows, is Chaucer's own. It may, however, have been suggested by the description of the passage of Arcite's soul to heaven in *The Theseide*, which Chaucer omits in *The Knightes Tale*, perhaps because he had already adopted it in this poem.

[2] This address is very superior in delicacy and thoughtfulness to that in the *Filostrato*:

'O giovinetti, a quali con l'etate
Sorge per donne il fervente desio,
I vostri desederj raffrenate,
I passi vani, e l'appetito rio,
E nel amor di Troilo vi specchiate,
Come vi mostra questo verso mio;
Che se col cuore attento leggerete,
Di femine all' amor non crederete.'

Lo! here of payens corsed olde rites!
Lo! here what alle hire goddes may availle!
Lo! here this wreched worldes appetites!
Lo! here the fyn and guerdon for travaille,
Of Jove, Apollo, of Mars, and swich rescaille!
Lo! here the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrie, if ye hire bokes seche.

L'ENVOYE DU CHAUCER.

O MORAL Gower,[1] this boke I directe
To the, and to the philosophical Strode,[2]
To vouchensauf, ther nede is, to correcte,
Of youre benignites and zeles good.
And to that sothfast Criste that starf on roode,
With al myn herte, of mercy evere I preye,
And to the Lord right thus I speke and seye:—

Thow Oon, and Two, and Thre, eterne on lyve,
That regnest ay in Thre, and Two, and Oon,
Uncircumscript, and al maist circumscrive!
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende, and to thi mercy everichon,
So mak us, Jesu, for thy mercy digne,
For love of Maide and Moder thyn benigne!

EXPLICIT LIBER TROILI ET CRISEYDIS.

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[1] John Gower, the poet, was born, as is generally supposed, somewhat earlier in the fourteenth century than his friend Chaucer, whom he survived however by eight years. Of his three great works the first, called *Speculum Meditantis*, said to have been written in French, is lost. The second, called *Vox Clamantis*, is a poem in elegiac Latin verse; and the third, *Confessio Amantis*, is in English octosyllabic metre. He is the author also of several ballads in French, of considerable merit. They were collected, and edited for the Roxburgh Club, by the present Duke of Sutherland, then Earl Gower, the supposed representative of the poet's family. Gower has repaid this tribute of Chaucer's to his genius and worth, by some complimentary lines in the *Confessio Amantis*.—See vol. i. p. 29, note 1.

[2] Of Strode, Warton says that he was eminent for his scholastic attainments, and was tutor to Chaucer's son, Lewis, at Merton College, Oxford. He was probably the Ralph Strode, of whom Wood says:—Radulphus Strode, de quo sic vetus noster catalogus. Poeta fuit, et versificavit librum elegiacum, vocatum 'Phantasma Rodulphi.'—*Claruit*, 1370.

CHAUCERES DREME.

[THERE is no reason to doubt the authenticity of this poem, although, as far as can be ascertained, it does not exist in MS. It was first published in 1597 by Speght, who observes that it is properly called *Chauceres Dreme*, the poem which had previously gone by that name being more correctly entitled *The Boke of the Duchesse, or, The Dethe of Blanche.* The subject, or story, may be thus described.

While lying thinking of his mistress the poet falls asleep, and dreams that he is in an unknown island, inhabited by ladies only, whose queen has just returned from a pilgrimage she is in the habit of performing every seven years, for the purpose of obtaining three apples, which grow upon a mountain in a distant country. These apples are endowed with different properties. The first confers on its possessors perpetual youth and beauty; the second supports, without nourishment, those who only look upon it; and the third secures success in all their undertakings to those who bear it about them.

The queen relates how, on this occasion, she had been anticipated in the object of her mission by an unknown lady, who had gathered the apples before her arrival; how this lady (who accompanies her, and turns out to be the poet's mistress,) had taken pity on her distress, and given her the apples; and how a stranger knight had carried her off by force to his ship. This knight is also present, and is very penitent for his violence. The God of Love now appears; at his command the queen forgives the knight, and it is agreed that they shall be married; that he shall go to his own kingdom to make preparation, and return in ten days with a retinue sufficient to provide husbands for all the ladies in the island. He is unable, however, to complete his arrangements, and does not come back till some days after the appointed time; when he finds that the queen and two-thirds of the ladies have died of grief, for the slight thus put upon them.

Overwhelmed with remorse, the knight plunges a dagger into his heart. In the midst of the funeral obsequies which follow, a bird flies into the church, and beats itself to death against a window; but is resuscitated by means of a certain grain which its companions put into its beak. The virtues of this seed are then tried upon the knight and ladies, who are all restored to life, and happily married. The queen then sends for the poet's mistress, who in the meantime had returned to her home, and prevails on her to marry him. Awakened by the minstrelsy at his own wedding, Chaucer writes down his dream, which he dedicates to his mistress, entreating her to turn its 'substaunce' into a reality.

Speght's explanation of this allegory is ingenious. He says it 'seemeth to be a covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt with Blanche, the daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, who after long love (during the time whereof the poet feigneth them to be dead) were in the end, by consent of friends, happily married, figured by a bird bringing in his bill an herb which restored them to life again. Here also is showed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who, although she was a stranger, was, notwithstanding, so well loved of the Lady Blanche and her Lord, as Chaucer himself also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage between them.'

Tyrwhitt pronounces this to be 'mere fancy;' but although we cannot trace all the allusions to actual circumstances, there can be little doubt that the *Dreme* relates to John of Gaunt's marriage, and Chaucer's courtship. The former event took place at Reading in May, 1359, when John of Gaunt, being then Earl of Richmond, and only nineteen, was united to his cousin, Blanche.[1] The *Dreme* must have been written after that date, and before Chaucer's marriage, which is supposed to have occurred in the following year.[2]

In the absence of MSS., the text of Speght has been adopted, restored, however, as far as possible, to the forms of the fourteenth century.]

[1] See Walsingham, Edw. III. [2] See Life, vol. i. p. 16.

WHANNE Flora,[1] quene of plesaunce,
Had hole acheved thobeisaunce
Of the fresshe and newe sesoun,[2]
Thorow out every regioun;
And with hire mantel hole coverte
That winter made had discoverte;[3]
Of aventure, withoute light,
In May, I leye, upon a night,
Alone, and on my lady thought;
And how the lord that hire wrought,
Couthe wele entaile in imagery,[4]
And shewed hadde grete maistry,
Whanne he in so litil space,
Made swiche a body and a face,
So grete beute with swiche fetures,
More than in othere creatures.
And in my thoughtes as I leye
In a loge out of the weye,
Beside a welle in a forest,
Wher after hunting I toke rest,
Nature and Kind so in me wroughte,
That halfe on slepe they me broughte;
And gan to dreme, to my thinking,
With mind of knowliche like making;[5]
For what I dremed, as me thought,
I saugh it, and I slepte nought.
Wherfor is yet my ful beleve,
That some gode spirit, that eve,
By mene of some curious port,[6]
Bar me, wher I saw peyne and sport;

[1] Thus, in *The Flower and the Leafe*, Flora and her train represent those who delight in pleasure and idleness.—See vol. iv. p. 258.

[2] That is, 'Had entirely won, or brought into subjection, the new season.'

[3] That is, 'And had wholly covered with her mantle, *scil.*, of leaves and flowers, the earth which winter had uncovered.'

[4] That is, 'Could well carve in sculpture.'

[5] The meaning is, 'With my mind creating fancies which were so vivid that they resembled the certainty of knowledge.'

[6] *Port* appears to mean here, *mode of carriage*, from the French, *porter*.

But, whether it were I wok or slepte,
Wel wot I of, I lough and wepte;
Wherfor I wol, in remembraunce,
Put hole the peyne, and the plesaunce,
Which was to me axes[1] and hele.
Wold God ye wist it every dele!
Or, at the leste, ye might, o night,
Of swiche another have a sight!
Although it were to you a peyne,
Yet on the morow ye wolde be feyne,
And wish it mighte longe dure.
Than might ye say ye had good cure;
For he that dremes, and wenes he se,
Much the better yet may he
Wite what, and of whom, and where;
And eke the lasse it wol hindere,
To thinke, 'I se this with mine eene;'
Ywis this may not dreme bene,[2]
But signe or signifiaunce,
Of hasty thing souning plesaunce.
For on this wise, upon a night,
As ye have herd, withoute light,
Not al waking, ne ful on slepe,
About such houre as loveres wepe,
And crye after their lady grace,
Befel me this wondre cas,
Which ye shalle here, and al the wise,
So holly as I can devise,
In pleyne Englische, evil written;
For slepe[3] writer, wel ye witten,
Excused is, though he do misse,
More than one that waking is.

---

[1] Speght reads *axen*, probably a clerical error for *axes*, or accesse, an ague. The poet says, 'I will put down, or describe, the pain and the pleasure, which I dreamt of, and which resembled the alternations of sickness and health in an ague.'

[2] The old editions read *kene*, which is obviously an error.

[3] A *sleepy writer*, as one who has just awakened from this marvellous dream, ought to be excused for any lapses he may commit.

Wherfor here, of your gentilnesse,
I you require, my boistousnesse
Ye lete passe, as thinge rude,
And hereth what I wol conclude;
And of the enditing taketh no hede,
Ne of the termes, so God you spede!
But let al passe as nothing were,
For thus befel, as you shal here.
Within an yle me thought I was,
Where wal, and yate was al of glasse,
And so was closed rounde about,
That levelesse none come in ne out,
Uncouthe and straunge to behold;
For every yate, of fine gold,
A thousand fanes, ay turning,
Entuned had, and briddes singing,
Diverse; and on eche fane a paire,
With open mouth, again thaire.[1]
And of a sute were alle the toures,
Subtily corven after floures
Of uncouth colours, during ay,
That never bene none sene in May,[2]
With many a smale turret heygh;
But man on live could I non seigh,
Ne creatures, save ladies pleye,
Which were swiche of hire arreye,

[1] Every gate, of fine gold, had upon it a thousand *fanes*, i. e., vans or weathercocks, which, as they turned in the wind, produced a sound like the singing of birds; and on each van were represented a pair of birds, with their mouths opened *against the air*, or towards that quarter whence the wind blew. The poet apparently imagines that these vans were constructed on a self-playing principle, like an Æolian harp. Their heads being always kept to the wind, it blew down their throats, in which was some instrument for producing the sound. The same contrivance is described in Hawes's *Passetyme of Pleasure*:—

Aloft the towres the golden fanes goode
Dyde with the wynde make ful sweete armony;
Them for to heare it was great melody.—Chap. xxxviii.

[2] That is, 'Such as are never seen in May.' From this passage it appears that the beautifully delicate carvings of leaves and flowers which abound in the architecture of Chaucer's time, were coloured to imitate nature.—See vol. iv. p. 132, note 1.

That, as me thought, of goodlihede,
They passeden alle, and womanhede.
For to beholde hem daunce and singe,
It semed like non erthly thing,
Such was hire uncouthe countenaunce,[1]
In every pleye of right usaunce.
And of one age everichone,
They seemed alle sauf onely one,
Which had of yeres suffisaunce,
For sche might neither singe ne daunce;
But yet hire countenaunce was so glad,
As sche so fewe yeres had had,
As any lady that was there,
And as litil it did her dere[2]
Of lustines to laughe and tale,
As she had fulle stuffed a male
Of disportes and newe pleyes.
Faire had sche ben in hire dayes,
And maistresse semed wele to be,
Of al that lusty compaignie.
And so sche might, I you ensure;
For one the conningest creature
Sche was, and so seyde everichone,
That ever hire knew, ther failed none.
For sche was sobre, and wel avised,
And from every fault disguised,
And nothing used but feith and trouthe;
That sche nas yonge it was grete routhe.
For every wher, and in ech place,
Sche governed her, that in grace
Sche stode alwey with poore and riche,
That, at a word, was none hire liche,
Ne halfe so able maistres to be
To such a lusty compaignie.

[1] Countenaunce here means behaviour—the way they contained, or behaved themselves. The meaning, therefore, is, 'Such was their unusual [uncouthe—unknown] behaviour.' It occurs again a few lines lower down in the same signification—'hire countenaunce was so glad,' *i. e.*, her behaviour was so joyful.

[2] *Dere* means in this place to incapacitate.

Befel me so, whanne I avised
Had the yle that me suffised,
And hole the estat every wher,
That in that lusty yle was ther,—
Which was more wonder to devise,
Than the joieux paradise,
I dar wel seye; for floure ne tre,
Ne thing wherin plesaunce might be,
Ther failed none; for every wight,
Had they desired, day and night,
Riches, hele, beute, and ese,
With every thing that hem might plese,
Thinke and have, it cost no more!
In swiche a country ther before,
Had I not bene ne herde telle,
That lives creature mighte dwelle.—
And whanne I had thus al aboute,
The yle avised thorughoute,
The state, and how they were areyed,
In my herte I were wel peyed,
And in my selfe I me assured,
That in my body I was wel ured,
Sith I might have such a grace,
To se the ladies and the place;
Which were so feyre, I you ensure,
That, to my dome, though that Nature,
Wolde ever strive and do her peyne,
Sche scholde not conne, ne mow atteyne,
The leste feture to amende,
Though she wolde al her conning spende,
That to beute mighte availle.
It were but peyne and lost travaille,
Swiche part, in their nativite,
Was them alarged of beute.[1]
And eke they had a thing notable,
Unto their dethe ay durable;

[1] That is, 'A large share of beauty was lavished upon them at their nativity.'

And was, that their beute scholde dure,
Which was never sene in creature;
Sauf onely there, as I trow,
It hath not be wist ne know.
Wherfor I preyse, with their conning,
That during beute, riche thing.[1]
Had they been of their lives certeyne,
They had been quite of every peyne![2]
And whan I wende thus al have sene,
The state, the riches, that might bene,
That me thought impossible were,
To see one thing more than was there,
That to beute or glad conning,
Serve or availle might any thing;
Alle sodeynly, as I there stode,
This lady, that couthe so much gode,
Unto me com with smiling chere,
And seyde, '*Benedicite!* this yere
Saugh I never man here but you!
Telle me how ye come hider now;
And youre name, and where ye dwelle,
And whom ye seeke, eke mote ye telle,
And how ye come be to this place;
The soth wele told may cause you grace.
And elles ye mote prisoner be,
Unto the ladies here, and me,
That have the governaunce of this yle.'
And with that word sche gan to smile,
And so did all the lusty route,
Of ladies that stode hire aboute.
'Madame,' quod I, 'this nighte paste,
Loged I was, and slepte faste,
In a forest beside a welle,
And now am here; how schold I telle?

[1] The meaning appears to be, 'Therefore I commend their unchanging beauty, which is so rich a gift, as also their knowledge, or conning.'

[2] That is, 'Had they been certain that they would have lived for ever, they would have been free from every anxiety.'

Wot I not by whose ordinaunce,
But onely Fortunes purveiaunce,
Which puttes many, as I gesse,
To travaille, peyne, and bysinesse,
And lettes nothing for their trouth,
But some sleeth eke, and that is routh;
Wherfor I doute her brittilnes,
Her variaunce and unstedefastnes;
So that I am as yet afrayed,
And of my being here amayed.
For wonder thinge semeth me,
Thus many fressh ladies to se,
So faire, so cunninge, and so yonge,
And no man dwelling hem amonge.
Not I not how I hider come;
Madame,' quod I, 'this al and some!
What scholde I feyne a longe processe
To you that seme swiche a princesse?
What plese you commaunde or seye,
Here I am you to obeye
To my power, and all fulfille,
And prisoner bide at your wille,
Til you duly enformed be,
Of every thing ye axe me.'
This lady ther, right wel apayde,
Me by the hande toke, and seyde,
'Welcom, prisoner adventurous!
Right glad am I ye have seyde thus!
And for ye doute me to displese,
I will assaye to do you ese,'
And, with that word, ye! right anon,
She, and the ladies everichon
Assembled, and to counseile wente;
And, after that, soone for me sente,
And to me seyde on this manere,
Word for word, as ye shalle here.
'To se you here us thinketh marvaile,
And how, withoute bote or saile,

By any subtilte or wyle,
Ye get have entre in this yle.
But nought for that;[1] yet schalle ye se,
That we gentille women be,
Lothe to displese any wighte,
Notwithstanding our grete righte;
And for ye schul wel understonde
The olde custome of this londe,
Which hath continued many yere,
Ye schal wele wete that with us here
Ye may not bide, for causes tweyne,
Which we be purposed you to seyne.
'Thone is this;—our ordinaunce,
Which is of long continuance,
Wole not, sothly we you telle,
That no man here among us dwelle;
Wherfor ye mote needes retourne;
In no wise may you here sojourne.
'Thother is eke, that oure quene
Out of the realme, as ye may sene,
Is; and may be to us a charge,
If we lete you go here at large;
For whiche cause the more we doute,
To do a fault while sche is oute,
Or suffre that may be noysaunce,
Ageine our old accustomaunce.'
And whanne I had thise causes tweyne
Herde, O God! what a peyne
Al sodeynly about myn herte,
Ther com at ones, and how smerte,
Increping softe! as who should stele,
Or do me robbe of al myn hele,
And made me in my thought so frayed,
That in courage I stode dismayed.
And, standing thus, as was my grace,
A lady com more than a pace,

[1] That is, 'We will not now dwell upon that point.'

With huge prease hire aboute,
And told how that the quene withoute
Was arived, and wolde come inne.
Wel were they that thider mighte winne![1]
They hied so they wolde not abide
The bridling hire hors to ride,
By five, by sixe, by two, by thre!
There was not one abode with me.
The quene to mete, everichon,
They wente, and bode with me not one.
And I, after a softe pace,
Imagining how to purchace
Grace of the quene ther to bide,
Til gode fortune some happy gide
Me sende might, that wold me bringe
Wher I was borne to my wonning;
For way ne fote knew I none,
Ne witherward I nist to gone,
For al was see about the yle.
No wonder though me list not smile,
Seeing the case uncouthe and straunge,
And so in[2] like a perilous chaunge.
Imagining thus, walking alone,
I saugh the ladies everichone.
So that I might somwhat offere,
Sone after that I drew me nere;
And tho I was ware of the quene,
And how the ladies on their knene,
With joyouse wordes, gladly advised,
Hire welcomed so that it suffised,
Though she princes hole had be
Of al environed is with se.[3]

---

[1] *Twin* is Speght's reading; but the *t* was evidently carried on by mistake from the might. *Winne* means to attain.

[2] The *in* appears to spoil the sense of the passage.

[3] That is, 'I perceived how the ladies welcomed her with as much respect and cordiality as if she had been princess of all the land which is surrounded by the sea.'

And thus avising, with chere sad,
Al sodeynlyche I was glad,
That gretter joye, as mote I thrive,
I trow had never man on live,
Than I tho, ne herte more light,
Whanne of my lady I had sight,
Which with the quene come was there,
And in one clothing both they were.
A knight also ther, wel besene,
I saugh, that come was with the quene;
Of whome the ladies of that yle
Hadde huge wonder longe while.
Til atte last, right sobrely,
The quene her selfe, ful cunningly,
With softe wordes, in gode wise,
Seyde to the ladies yonge and nise:—
'My susters, how it hath befalle,
I trow ye know it, one and alle,
That of long time here have I bene,
Within this yle biding as quene,
Living at ese, that never wight
More parfite joye have ne might;
And to you ben of governaunce,
Swich as you fonde in hole pleasaunce,
In every thinge as ye knowe,
After our custome and our lowe;[1]
Which how they ferste fonde were,
I trow ye wote al the manere.
And who the quene is of this yle,
As I have bene longe while,
Ech seven yeres mote of usage,
Visite the hevenly armitage,
Which on a rokke so heighe stondes,
In straunge se out from alle londes;
That to make the pilgrimage
Is called a perillous viage;

[1] *Lowe* is here put, by poetic licence, for *law*.

For if the wind be not gode frende,
The journey dures to the ende
Of him that it undertakes;
Of twenty thousand one not scapes.
Upon which rokke growth a tre,
That certeyne yeres beres apples thre;
Which thre apples who may have,
Ben from al displesaunce save,
That in the seven yere may falle;
This wote you wele one and alle.
For the ferste apple and the hext,[1]
Which groweth unto you next,
Hath thre vertues notable,
And kepeth youthe aye durable,
Beute and loke, ever in one,
And is the best in everichone.
'The second apple, red and grene,
Onely with lokes of your yene,
You nourishes in grete plesaunce,
Better than partridge or fesaunce,
And feedes every lives wight
Plesantly onely with the sight.
'The thridde apple of the thre,
Which groweth lowest on the tre,
Who it beres may not faile
That to his plesaunce may availe.
So your plesure and beute riche,
Your during youthe, every liche,
Your trouthe, your cunning, and your wele,
Hath aye floured, and your gode hele,
Without sicknes or displesaunce,
Or thing that to you was noysaunce.
So that you have, as goddesses,
Lived above alle princesses.

[1] *Hext* is a contraction for *heighest*, the superlative degree of *heigh*, high. Thus *next* is the contracted form of *neighest*, the superlative degree of *neigh*, nigh, or near, which last is a corruption of *nerre*, the contracted form of *neigher*.

'Now is befalle as ye may se,
To gather thise seyde apples thre,
I have not failed, ageine the day,
Thitherward to take the weye,
Wening to spede as I had ofte.
But whanne I come, I find alofte
My suster, which that here standes,
Having those apples in hire handes,
Avising hem, and nothing seyde,
But loked as sche were wele apeyde.
And as I stode hire to beholde,
Thinking how my joyes were colde,
Sith I those apples have ne might,
Even with that so com this knight,
And in his armes, of me unwar,
Me toke, and to his schippe me bar;
And seyde, though him I never had sene,
Yet had I longe his lady bene;
Wherfor I scholde with him wende,
And he wold, to his lives ende,
My servaunt be; and gan to singe,
As one that had wonne a riche thinge.
Tho were my spirits fro me gone
So sodeynliche everichone,
That in me appered but dethe;
For I felt neither life ne brethe,
Ne gode ne harme none I knewe;
The sodeyne peyne me was so newe,
That, had not the hasty grace be
Of this lady, that fro the tre
Of her gentilnesse so heyede
Me to comforte, I had deyede,
And of hire thre apples, one
In myn hand ther put anone,
Which brought ageyne mind and brethe,
And me recovered from the dethe.
Wherfor to hire so am I holde,
That for hire alle thinges do I wolde;

For sche was lech of al my smerte,
And from grete peyne so quit myn herte.
And, as God wote, right as ye here,
Me to comforte, with frendly chere,
She did her prowesse and her might.
And trewely eke so did this knight,
In that he couthe; and ofte seyde,
That of my wo he was evyl apeyde,
And cursed the schippe that hem ther broughte,
The mast, the master that it wroughte.
And, as ech thing mote have an ende,
My suster here, your brother frende,
Con with her wordes so womanly
This knight entrete, and conningly,
For myn honour and his also;
And seyde that with hire we scholde go
Both in hire schippe, wher sche was brought,
Which was so wonderfully wrought,
So clene, so rich, and so arayde,
That we were both content and payde;
And me to comforte and to plese,
And myn herte to putte at ese,
She toke grete peyne in littil while,
And thus hath broughte us to this yle,
As ye may se; wherfor echone,
I preye you, thanke her one and one,
As hertely, as ye can devise,
Or imagine in any wise.'
At ones ther tho men might sene
A world of ladies[1] falle on kneen
Befor my lady; that ther aboute
Was lefte none standing in the route,
But altogither they went at ones
To knele; they spared not for the stones,

[1] This expression has already occurred in *The Flower and the Leaf.* See vol. iv. p. 241.

Ne for estat, ne for hire blode;
Wel shewed ther they couthe much gode;
For to my lady they made swich feste,
With swiche wordes, that the lest,
So frendly and so feithfully
Seyde was, and so cunningly,
That wonder was, seing hire youthe,
To here the langage they couthe,
And holly how they governed were,
In thanking of my lady there;
And seyde, by wille and maundement
They were at hire commaundement,
Which was to me as grete a joye,
As winning of the towne of Troye
Was to the hardy Grekes stronge,
Whanne they it wonne with sege longe,
To see my lady in swiche a place,
So receved as sche was.
And whanne they talked hadde a while
Of this and that, and of the yle,
My lady, and the ladies there,
Alle togither as they were,
The quene hire selfe began to pleye,
And to the aged lady seye:—
'Now semeth you not gode it were,
Sith we be alle togither here,
To ordeyne and devise the beste,
To set this knight and me at reste?
For woman is a feble wight,
To rere a werre ageinst a knight.
And sith he here is in this place,
At my list, daunger, or grace,
It were to me grete villany,
To do him any tiranny.
But feyne I wolde, now wille ye here,
In his owne country that he were,
And I in pees, and he at ese;
This were a way us bothe to please,

If it might be; I you beseche,
With him hereof you falle in speche.'
This lady tho began to smile,
Avising her a littil while;
And, with glad chere, sche seyde anone,
'Madame I wil unto him gone,
And with him speke, and of him fele
What he desires every dele.'
And sobrely this lady tho,
Hire selfe and othere ladies two
She toke with hire, and with sad chere,
Seyde to the knight on this manere:—
'Sir, the princes of this yle,
Whom, for your plesaunce, many mile
Ye sought have, as I understonde,
Til atte last ye have hire fonde,
Me sent hath here, and ladies tweyne,
To here al thinge that ye seyne;
And for what cause ye have hire soughte,
Feyne wold she wote al hole youre thoughte;[1]
And why you do hire al this wo,
And for what cause you be hire fo,
And why of every wight unwar,
By fors ye to youre schippe hire bar,
That she so neighe was agone,
That mind ne speche hadde sche none,
But as a peynfulle creature,
Dying, abode her adventure;
That hire to se indure that peyne,
Here wel I seye unto you pleyne,
Right on youre selfe ye did amisse,
Seeing how sche a princes is.'
This knight, the whiche couthe his gode,
Right of his trouthe meved his blode,[2]

[1] Speght reads *and*, which is unintelligible. *Al hole* means *all wholly*.

[2] 'Because of his truth,' *i.e.*, his honour as a knight, his 'blood moved, or quailed.'

That pale he wax as any lede,
And looked as he wolde be dede.
Blode was ther none in nother cheke,
Wordlesse he was, and semed sicke,
And so it proved wel he was;
For, without moving any paas,
Al sodeynely, as thing dying,
He fel at ones downe sowning:
That for his wo, this lady frayde,
Unto the quene hire hyed and seyde,
'Cometh on anon, as have you blisse!
But ye be wise, thing is amisse;
This knight is dede or wil be soone,
Lo! wher he lyeth in a swoone,
Withoute word, or answering,
To that I have seyde, any thing![1]
Wherfor I doute that the blame,
Might be hindering to youre name,
Which floured hath so many yere,
So longe, that, for nothing here,
I wolde in no wise he deyde;
Wherfor gode were that ye heyde,
His life to save at the leste;
And, after that his wo be ceste,
Commaunde him voyde, or dwelle;
For in no wise dar I more melle
Of thing wherein swich peril is,
As like is now to falle of this.'
This quene right tho, ful of grete fere,
With alle the ladies present there,
Unto the knight com wher he leye,
And made a lady to him seye:—
'Lo! here the quene! awake, for shame!
What wille you do? is this gode game?
Why lye you here? what is youre mind?
Now is wel sene your wit is blind,

[1] That is, 'Without answering anything to what I have said.'

To se so many ladies here,
And ye to make none other chere,
But as ye set hem alle at nought!
Arise, for his love that you bought!'
But what sche seyde, a word not one
He spak, ne answer gaf hire none.
The quene, of very pite tho,
Hire worship, and his like also,
To save ther she did hire peyne,
And quok for fere, and gan to seyne
For wo, 'Alas! what shal I do?
What shal I seye this man unto?
If he deye here, lost is my name!
How schal I pleye this perillous game?
If any thing be here amisse,
It schal be seyde, it rigour is;
Wherby my name impayre might,
And like to deye eke is this knight.'
And, with that word, hire hand sche leyde
Upon his brest, and to him seyde,
'Awake, my knight! lo! it am I
That to you speke; now telle me why
Ye fare thus, and this peyne endure,
Seing ye be in country sure,
Amonge swiche frendes that wolde you hele,
Your hertes ese eke and your wele;
And, if I wist what you might ese,
Or knowe the thing that you might plese,
I you ensure it scholde not faile,
That to your hele you might availe.
Wherfor with alle my herte I preye
Ye rise, and lete us talke and pleye,
And se how many ladies here,
Be comen for to make gode chere.'
Al was for nought, for stille as stone
He leye, and word ne spak he none.
Long while was or he mighte breyde,
And of al that the quene hadde seyde,

He wist no word; but atte laste,
'Mercy,'[1] twise he cried faste,
That pite was his vois to here,
Or to beholde his peyneful chere,
Which was not feyned, wel was to seine,
Both by his visage and his eyne,
Which on the quene at ones he caste,
And syked as he wold to-braste;
And after that he shrighte so,
That wonder was to se his wo;
For sith that peyne was ferste named,
Was never more woful peyne attained;
For with vois dede he gan to pleyne,
And to himselfe thise wordes seyne:—
'I, woful wight, ful of malure,
Am wors than dede, and yet I dure,
Maugre any peyne or dethe,
Ageinst my wille I fele my brethe.[2]
Why nam I dede, sith I ne serve,
And sith my lady wil me sterve?
Wher artow Dethe? artow agast?
Wele shale we mete yet atte laste;
Though thou the hide, it is for nought,
For wher thou dwelst thou shalt be sought.
Maugre thy subtil, double face,
Here wil I deye, right in this place,
To thy dishonour and myn ese;
Thy maner is no wight to plese.
What nedes the, sith I the seche,
So the to hide my peyne to eche?
And wel wostow I wil not live,
Who wold me al this world here give;

---

[1] Thus Troylus addresses Cryseyde:—

Lo, altherferste word that hym astert,
Was twies, 'Mercy, mercy, my dere hert.'

[2] Speght reads *fell*, Urry, *fele;* but the latter is only a conjectural emendation, for Speght's is the earliest edition of this poem, and there is no MS. of it extant.

For I have, with my cowardise,
Lost joy, and hele, and my servise,
And made my sovereigne lady so,
That, while she lives, I trow, my fo.
She wil be ever to hire ende;
Thus have I neither joye ne frende.
Wote I not whether hast or slouthe
Hath caused this now, by my trouthe;
For at the hermitage ful heye,
Whanne I hire saugh ferste with myn eye,
I heyed til I was alofte,
And made my pace smale and softe,
Til in myn armes I hadde her faste,
And to my schippe bar atte last;
Wherof she was displesed so,
That endelesse ther semed hire wo;
And I therof had so grete fere,
That me repente that I com there.
Which hast I trow gan her displese,
And is the cause of my disese.'
And, with that word, he gan to crye,
'Now Dethe, Dethe!' twy or thrye,
And motred, wot I not what, of slouthe.
And, even with that, the quene of routhe,
Him in hire armes toke, and seyde,
'Now, myn owne knight! be not evil apeyde,
That I, a lady, to you sent,
To have knowledge of youre entent;
For, in gode feithe, I ment but wele,
And wolde ye wist it, every dele,
Nor wil not do to you, ywis.'[1]
And, with that word, she gan him kisse,
And preyed him rise, and seyde she wolde
His welfare, by her trouthe; and tolde
Him how she was, for his disese,
Right sory, and feyne wolde him plese,

[1] That is, 'And will not do to you *but well*, ywis.'

His life to save. These wordes tho,
She seyde to him, and many mo,
In comforting; for, from the peyne,
She wold he were delivered feyne.
The knight tho up caste his eene,
And whanne he saugh it was the quene,
That to him hadde thise wordes seyde,
Right in his wo he gan to breyde,
And him up dresses for to knele,
The quene avising wonder wele.
But, as he roos he overthrewe;
Wherfor the quene, yet eft anewe,
Him in hire armes anon toke,
And pitously gan on him loke;
But, for al that, nothing sche seyde,
Ne spak not like sche were wele peyde;
Ne no chere made, ne sad, ne light,
But, al in one, to every wight,
Ther was sene conning, with estate,
In hire withoute noise or debate;
For, sauf[1] onely a loke pitous,
Of womanhede undispitous,
That she showed in countenaunce;
For semed her herte, from obeisaunce,
And not for that she did her reyne,
Him to recure from the peyne,
And his herte to putte at large.
For her entent was, to his barge
Him to bringe ageinst the eve,
With certaine ladies, and take leve,
And preye him, of his gentilnesse,
To suffre hire thennisforth in pees,
As other princes had before;
And from thennisforth, for evermore,

[1] The construction is, 'She made no chere, neither sad, nor light, but for a piteous look which she showed in her countenance.'

She wolde him worschippe in alle wise,
That gentilnesse might devise;
And peyne her holly to fulfille,
In honour, his plesure and wille.
And during thus this knightes wo,
Present the quene and othere mo,[1]
My lady and many another wight,
Ten thousand schippes, at a sight,
I saugh come over the wawy flode,
With saile and ore; that as I stode
Them to beholde, I gan marvaile,
From whom might come so many a saile;
For sith the time that I was bore,
Swich a navy ther before
Had I not sene, ne so arayed,
That for the sight my herte pleyed
To and fro within my breste;
For joye, longe was or it wolde reste.
For ther was sailes fulle of floures;[2]
After, castels with huge toures,
Seming full of armes brighte,[3]
That wondre lusty was the sight;
With large toppes, and mastes longe,
Richly depeint and rere amonge.[4]
At certeyne times gan repaire
Smale briddes downe from th'aire,
And on the schippes boundes aboute,
Sate and song, with vois fulle oute,
Ballades and leyes right joyously,
As they couthe in their harmony,

---

[1] That is, '*Whilst* this knight's woe was thus enduring, the queen and many more being present.' *The Quene* and *my lady* are nominatives absolute.

[2] The sails had flowers painted or embroidered upon them.

[3] 'Next these were castles,' &c. Ships were anciently constructed with bulwarks so high as to resemble towers at the forecastle and poop, from which armed men might the more easily cast their missiles. Hence the word forecastle.

[4] That is, 'Reared, or raised, in the midst.'

That you to write that I ther se,
Myn excuse is, it may not be;
For why? the matere were to long
To name the briddes, and write hire song.
Whereof anon the tidings there
Unto the quene sone broughte were,
With many 'alas,' and many a doute,
Schewing the schippes there withoute.
Tho gan the aged lady wepe,
And seyde, 'Alas! oure joye on slepe
Sone shal be brought, ye! longe or night,
For we discried ben by this knight!
For, certes, it may none other be,
But he is of yond compaignie,
And they be come him here to seche.'
And with that word hire failed speche,
'Withoute remede we be destruyd,'[1]
Fulle ofte seyde alle, and gan conclude,
Holy at ones atte laste,
That best was, shitte hire yates faste,
And arme hem alle in gode langage,
As they had done of olde usage,
And of faire wordes make hire schot.[2]
This was hire counseile and the knot,
And other purpos toke they none;
But, armed thus, forthe they gone
Toward the walles of the yle.
But, or they come ther longe while,
They met the grete lord of above,[3]
That called is the God of Love,
That hem avised with swiche chere,
Right as he with hem angry were.

---

[1] Speght reads *destroied*; but as the word ought to rhyme with *conclude*, it was evidently intended to be written as in the text, following the French form, *détruit*.

[2] The defensive armour of ladies is elegantly represented as consisting of good language, their shot, of fair words.

[3] That is, 'The great Lord from above, or from heaven.'

Availed hem nought their walles of glasse;
This mighty lord let not to passe
The shutting of their yates faste;
Al they had ordaind was but waste.
For whanne his schippes had fonde lande,
This lord anon, with bow in hande,
Into this yle, with huge prese,
Hyede faste and wolde not cese,
Til he com ther the knight leye;
Of quene ne lady by the weye
Toke he no hede, but forthe paste,
And yet alle folwed atte laste.
And whanne he com wher leye the knight,
Wele schewed he, he had grete might;
And forth the quene called anone,
And all the ladies everichone,
And to hem seyde, 'Is not this routhe,
To se my servaunt, for his trouthe,
Thus lene, thus sikke, and in this peyne,
And wot not unto whom to pleyne,
Sauf onely one, withoute mo,
Which might him hele, and is his fo?'[1]
And with that word, his hevy brow
He shewed the quene, and loked row.[2]
This mighty lord forth tho anone,
With o loke, hire faultes everichone
He can hire shewe;[3] in littil speche,
Commaunding hire to be his leche.
Withouten more, schortly to seye,
He thought the quene sone scholde obeye;
And in his hond he shoke his bowe,
And seyde right sone he wolde be knowe.
And, for sche had so long refused
His servise, and his lawes not used,

[1] That is, 'Who might restore him to health, and yet is his enemy.'
[2] Thus the God of Love looks *row* or rough, when Troylus mocks the pains of lovers.—See vol. v. p. 25.
[3] With one look he recalled to her mind all her faults.

He lete hire witte that he was wroth,
And bent his bow and forth he goth
A pace or two; and even there
A large draught up to his ere
He drewe;[1] and with an arwe grounde
Scharpe and new, the quene a wounde,
He gaf, that persed unto the herte,
Which afterward ful sore gan smerte,
And was not hole of many yere.
And, even with that,[2] 'Be of good chere,
My knight,' quod he, 'I wil the hele,
And the restore to parfite wele;
And for ech peyne thou hast endured,
To have two joyes thou art cured.'[3]
And forth he paste by the route,
With sobre chere walking aboute,
And what he seyde I thought to here;
Wele wist he which his servauntes were.
And, as he passed, anon he fonde
My lady, and hire toke by the honde,
And made her chere as a goddes,
And of beute called her princes;
Of bounte eke gaf hire the name,
And seyde ther was nothing to blame
In hire, but sche was vertuous,
Saving sche wolde no pite use;
Which was the cause that he hire sought,
To put that ferre oute of hire thought.
And sith sche hadde hole richesse
Of womanhede, and frendlinesse,
He seyde it was nothing fitting,
To voyde pite his owne leggyng.[4]

---

[1] He drew the bow so hard, that the string, with the arrow upon it, came up to his ear.

[2] At the same time that he did so, he said, &c.

[3] Care shall be taken that for every woe you have suffered you shall have two joys. This idea occurs in *The Troylus and Cryseyde*:—

'For every wo ye shul recovere a blis.'—Vol. v. p. 122.

[4] It was not proper that, as she was possessed of every virtue

And gan hire preche and with hire pleye,
And of hire beute told hire aye;
And seyde sche was a creature,
Of whom the name scholde endure,
And in bokes, fulle of plesaunce,
Be putte for ever in remembraunce.
And as me thoughte more frendly
Unto my lady, and goodlely
He spak, than any that was there;
And for thapples, I trow it were,
That she had in possessioun;
Wherfor longe in procession,
Many a pace, arme under other,
He welke,[1] and so did with none other,
But what he wolde commaunde or seye,
Forthwith needes alle must obeye;
And what he desired atte leste,
Of my lady, was by requeste.[2]
And whanne they longe together hadde bene,
He brought my lady to the quene,
And to hire seyde, 'So God you spede,
Shewe grace, consente, that is nede.'
My lady tho, ful conningly,
Right wele avised, and womanly,
Downe gan to knele upon the floures,
Which Aprille nourished hadde with shoures,
And to this mighty lord gan seye,
'That pleseth you, I wole obeye,
And me restreyne from other thought,
As ye wole al thing schal be wrought;'
And with that word, kneling, sche quok.
That mighty lord in armes hire toke,
And seyde, 'You have a servaunt one,
That trewer living is ther none;

---

belonging to womanhood, pity, which is one of the chief, should be driven out of his own proper lodging (legging), *scil.* her heart.

[1] Walked.

[2] Whilst the God of Love laid his commands upon others, he treated the poet's lady with so much respect that he only *requested* her.

Wherfor gode were, seing his trouthe,
That on his peynes ye hadde routhe,
And purpose you to here his speche,
Fully avised him to leche;
For of one thyng ye may be sure,
He wil be youres, while he may dure.'
And with that word, right on his game,
Me thought he lough, and told my name;
Which was to me marvaile, and fere,
That what to do I niste there;
Ne whether was me bet or none,
Ther to abide, or thus to gone.
For wele wende I my lady wolde
Imagine, or deme, that I had tolde
My counseile hole, or made compleynte
Unto that lord, that mighty seynte,
So verely, ech thing, unsought,
He seyde as he had knowne my thought,
And told my trouthe and myn unese,
Bet than I couthe have, for myne ese,
Though I had studied al a weke.
Wele wist that lord that I was seke,
And wolde be leched wondre feyne;
No man me blame, myn was the peyne.
And whanne this lord had alle seyde,
And longe with my lady pleyde,
Sche gan to smile with spirit glade;
This was the answere that sche made,
Which put me ther in double peyne,
That what to do, ne what to seyne,
Wist I not, ne what was the beste.
Ferre was my herte thanne fro his reste;
For as I thought, that smiling signe
Was token, that the herte encline
Wold to requestes resonable;
Because smiling is favorable
To every thinge that schal thrive.
So thought I tho anone blive

That wordlesse answere, in no toun,
Was tane[1] for obligacioun,
Ne called surete in no wise,
Amonges hem that called ben wise.
Thus was I in a joyous doute,
Sure, and unsurest of that route;
Right as myn herte thought it were,
So more or lesse wax my fere;
That if one thoughte made it wele,
Another schent it every dele.
Til atte laste I couthe no more,
But purposed, as I did before,
To serve trewely my lives space;
Awaiting ever the yere of grace,
Which may falle yet or I sterve,
If it plese hire that I serve,
And served have, and wole do ever.
For thing is none, that me is lever,
Thanne hire servise, whose presence
Myn heven is hole; and her absence
An helle, ful of divers peynes,
Which to the dethe ful ofte me streynes.
Thus in my thoughtes, as I stode,
That unneth felt I harme ne gode,
I saugh the quene, a littil paas,
Come where this mighty lorde was;
And kneled downe in presence there
Of alle the ladies that there were,
With sobre countenaunce avised,
In fewe wordes that wele suffised;
And to this lord anone present
A bille, wherin hole hire entent
Was written; and how she besought,
As he knew every wille and thought,
That of his godhede and his grace
He wolde forgive al old trespace,

[1] *Tane* is put for *taken*. The modern form of the contraction is *ta'en*.

And undisplesed be of time paste;
For she wolde ever be stedefaste,
And in his servise to the dethe
Use every thought while she had brethe.
And sighte and wepte, and seyde no more;
Withinne was written al the sore.
At whiche bille the lord gan smile,
And seyde he wolde within that yle
Be lord and sire, both este and weste,
And cald it there his new conqueste,
And in grete counseil toke the quene.
Longe were the tales hem betwene,
And over hire bille he radde thrise,
And wondre gladly can devise
Hire fetures faire, and hire visage,
And bad gode thrift on that image;
And seyde he trowed hire compleynt
Shold after cause hire be corseynt,[1]
And in his sleve[2] he putte the bille,
Was ther none that knewe his wille.
And forth he welke apace aboute,
Beholding al the lusty route,
Halfe in a thought, with smiling chere;
Til atte laste, as ye shal here,
He turned unto the quene ageyne,
And seyde, 'To-morne, here in this pleyne,
I wole ye be, and alle youres,
That purposed ben to were floures,
Or of my lusty colour[3] use;
It may not be to you excuse,

[1] *Corseint* is from the French *corps saint*, a holy body or relic. The word is met with in Robert de Brunne's translation of Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle*, 'The corseint and the kirke.' Also in *Piers Ploughman*:—

'Knowestow aught a corseint
That men calle Trouth?'

[2] The capacious sleeves of the time of Edward III. were often used as pockets. To this fashion refers the proverb, 'The friar preaches against stealing, and has a goose in his sleeve.'—See HERBERT'S *Jacula Prudentum*.

[3] It is not said here what is the colour, or livery of love. Milton calls celestial rosy red,' the hue of love.

Ne none of youres in no wise,
That able be to my servise.
For, as I seyde have here before,
I wil be lord for evermore
Of you, and of this yle, and alle,
And of alle youres, that have shalle
Joy, pees, ese, or in plesaunce
Youre lives use without noysaunce;
Here wil I in state be sene,'
(And turned his visage to the quene,)
'And you give knowledge of my wille,
And a ful answere of your bille.'
Was there no nay, ne wordes none,
But very obeysaunt semed echone,
Quene and other that were there;
Wele semed it they had grete fere.
And ther toke logging every wight,
Was none departed of that night.
And som to rede olde romances,
Hem occupiede for hire plesances;
Som to make verelaies, and laies,
And som to othere diverse pleyes.
And I to me a romaunce toke,
And as I reding was the boke,
Me thought the spere had so runne,
That it was rising of the sunne,
And such a prees into the pleyne
Assemble gone, that with grete peyne
One might for other go ne stande,
Ne none take other by the hande,
Withouten they distourbed were,
So huge and grete the prees was there.
And after that, within two houres,
This mighty lord, al in floures
Of divers colours many a peyre,
In his estat up in the aire,
Wele two fathom, as his hight,
He set him there in all hire sight.

And for the quene and for the knight,
And for my lady, and every wight,
In hast he sent, so that never one
Was ther absent, but com echone.
And whanne they thus assembled were,
As ye have herde me seye you here,
Withoute more tarrying, on hight,
Ther to be sene of every wight,
Up stode, among the prees above,
A counseyler, servaunt of Love,
Which semed wele, of grete estate;
And schewed ther, how no debate
Owe, ne goodly might, be used
In gentilnesse, and be excused.[1]
Wherfor he seyde, his lordes wille,
Was every wight ther schold be stille,
And in pees, and one accorde.
And thus commaunded at a word,
And can his tongue to swiche langage
Turne, that yet, in al myne age,
Herde I never so conningly
Man speke, ne halfe so feithfully.
For every thing he seyde there,
Semed as it inseled[2] were,
Or approved for very trewe.
Swiche was his cunning langage newe,
And wele according to his chere,[3]
That wher I be, me thinke I here
Him yet alwey, whan I myne one[4]
In any place may be alone.

---

[1] The construction of this sentence is intricate. The counsellor showed them how no debate ought (owe), nor properly (goodly) might, be used, according to the rules of good breeding (gentilnesse). This could not be done, and be excused.

[2] Delivered with such weight and authority as if it were a sealed deed.

[3] The arts of eloquence were carefully cultivated by the Norman nobility in England.—See vol. ii. p. 205, note 2.

[4] The meaning of *myn one* is literally my single self, myself singly;

Ferste con he, of the lusty yle
Al th' astat, in littil while,
Reherse, and holly every thing,
That caused ther his lordes comming;
And every wele and every wo,
And for what cause ech thing was so,
Wele shewed he ther in esy speche;
And how the sicke had nede of leche;
And that hole was, and in grace,
He tolde pleynly why ech thing was.
And atte laste he con conclude,
Voyded every langage rude,[1]
And seyde, 'That prince, that mighty lord,
Or his departing, wold accorde[2]
Alle the parties ther presente,
And was the fine of his entente,
Witnesse his presence in your sight,
Which sits among you in his might.'
And kneled downe withouten more,
And not o word spak he more.
Tho gan this mighty lord him dresse,
With chere avised, to do largesse;[3]
And seyde unto this knight and me,
'Ye shalle to joye restored be;
And for ye have ben trewe ye tweyne,
I graunte you here, for every peyne,
A thousand joyes every weke,
And loke ye be no lenger seke.
And bothe youre ladies, lo! hem here,
Take ech his owen; beeth of gode chere!
Your happy day is[4] newe begunne,
Sith it was rising of the sunne.

---

it would appear, therefore, that there is ancient authority for the hibernicism 'all alone by myself.'

[1] That is, 'All rude language being laid aside.'

[2] That is, 'The prince would reconcile all parties present; that was his object.'

[3] That is, 'To dispense his bounty.'

[4] Happy day appears to mean good fortune, like the French

And to alle othere in this place,
I graunte holly to stande in grace,
That serveth trewely, withoute slouthe,[1]
And to avaunced be by trouthe.'
Tho can this knight and I downe knele,
Wening to do wondre wele,
Seying, 'O Lord! youre grete mercy
Us hath enriched so openly,
That we deserve may, never more,
The leste part, but evermore
With soule and body trewely serve
You and youres til we sterve.'
And to oure ladies, ther they stode,
This knight, that couthe so mikel gode,
Went in hast, and I also.
Joyous, and glade were we tho,
And al so rich in every thought,
As he that al hath, and ought nought;[2]
And hem besoughte in humble wise,
Us taccepte to hire servise,
And shewe us of hire frendly cheres,
Which in hire tresure many yeres
They kepte hadde, us to grete peyne;[3]
And told how we their servauntes tweyne
Were and wolde be, and so hadde ever,
And to the dethe chaunge wolde we never,
Ne do offence, ne thinke like ille,[4]
But fille[5] hire ordinaunce and wille.

---

bonheur. The expression occurs in *Troylus and Cryseyde*.—See vol. v. p. 76, note 2.

[1] Sloth, or *accidia*, is reckoned among the seven deadly sins.—See *Persones Tale*, vol. iv. p. 64. This is an instance of the application of theological terms and ideas to the worship of the God of Love, observable in all Chaucer's allegorical poems.

[2] That is, 'As rich in our own estimation as he who possesses all, and owes nothing.'

[3] These ladies had kept their friendly cheer locked up in their treasury, as it were, to the great discouragement of their admirers.

[4] Perhaps the meaning may be, 'Nor have a thought which might even resemble evil.'

[5] *Fille* means *fulfil*.

And made our othes fresche newe,
Our olde servise to renewe,
And holly hires for evermore
We ther become; what mighte we more?
And wele awaiting,[1] that in slouthe
We made nè fault, ne in ourè trouthe,
Ne thoughte not do, I you ensure,
With oure wille, whiles we may dure.
This sesoun past, ageine an eve,
This lord of the quene toke leve;
And seyde he wolde hastely returne,
And at gode leyser ther sojourne,
Both for his honour, and for his ese,
Commaunding faste the knight to plese.
And gaf his statutes in papers,
And ordeynt divers officers.[2]
And forth to schippe the same night
He went, and sone was oute of sight.
And on the morwe whanne the aire
Attempred was, and wondre faire,
Erly, at rising of the sunne,
After the night awey was runne,
Pleyinge us on the rivage,
My lady spak of hire voyage,
And seyde sche made smale journies,
And helde hire in straunge countries.
And forthwith to the quene went,
And schewed her holly hire entent;
And toke her leve with chere weping,
That pite was to se that parting.
For to the quene it was a peyne,
As to a martyr newe ysleyne,
That for hire wo, and sche so tendre,
Yet I wepe ofte whanne I remembre,

[1] That is, 'We became wholly their servants, to wait upon them humbly and diligently.'

[2] The statutes and officers of the god will be found in *The Court of Love*.—See vol. iv.

She offerd there to resigne,
To my lady, eight times or nine,
Thastate, the yle, schortly to telle,
If it might plese hire ther to dwelle;
And seyde, for ever hire linage
Scholde to my lady do homage,
And hires be hole withouten more,
Ye, and alle hires for evermore.
'Nay, God forbede!' my lady ofte,
With many conning word and softe,
Seyd, 'that ever swich thing scholde ben
That I consente scholde, that a quene
Of your estat, and so wele named,
In any wise scholde be attamed.
But wolde be feyne, with alle my herte,
What so befel, or how me smerte,
To do thing that you mighte plese,
In any wise, or be your ese.'
And kissede ther, and bade gode night,
For whiche leve wepte many a wight.
Ther might men here my lady preysed,
And swich a name of hire araised,
What of cunning and frendlinesse,
What of beute with gentilnesse,
What of glade and frendly cheres,
That sche used in alle hire yeres,
That wondre was here every wight
To seye wele, how they did their might.
And with a prees upon the morwe,
To schippe hire broughte; and what a sorwe
They made, whanne sche scholde under saile,
That, and ye wist, ye wolde merveile.
Forth goth the schippe, out goth the sonde,[1]
And I, as a wode man unbonde,[2]

---

[1] *Sonde* is a sounding-line in French.
[2] That is, 'Like a madman who had escaped from his bonds.'

For doute to be behinde there,
Into the se, withouten fere,
Anone I ran, til with a wawe,
Al sodeynly I was overthrawe;
And with the water, to and fro,
Backward and forward, travailed so,
That mind and brethe neigh was gone,
For gode ne harme knew I none.
Til, atte laste, with hookes tweyne,
Men of the schippe, with mikel peyne,
To save my life, dide swich traveile,
That, and ye wist, ye wolde merveile.
And in the schippe me drewe on heye,
And seyden alle that I wolde deye;
And leyde me longe downe by the maste,
And of hire clothes on me caste.
And ther I made my testamente,
And wist my selfe not what I mente.
But whanne I seyde hadde what I wolde,
And to the mast my wo al tolde,[1]
And tane my leve of every wight,
And closed myn eyen, and lost my sight,
Avised to deye, withoute more speche,
Or any remede to seche,
Of grace newe, as was grete nede,
My lady of my peyne toke hede;
And hire bethought how that, for trouthe,
To se me deye it were grete routhe;
And to me com in sobre wise,
And softely seyde, 'I preye you, rise!
Come on with me; lete be this fare,
Al schal be wele, have ye no care!
I wil obeye, ye! and fulfille
Holy in al that lordes wille,

[1] He turned towards the mast, and complained to himself of his woe, like one about to die.'

That you and me, not longe ago,
After his list, commaunded so,
That ther ageine no resistence
May be, withoute grete offence.
And therfor now, lo,[1] what I seye:—
I am and wil be frendly aye.
Rise up! beholde, this avauntage
I graunte you in heritage,
Peceably withoute strive,
During the deyes of youre live.'
And of hire apples in my sleve[2]
One sche put, and toke hire leve
In wordes fewe, and seyde, 'Gode hele,
He that al made you sende, and wele!'
Wherwith my peynes alle at ones
Toke swiche leve, that alle my bones,
For the newe duranse[3] plesaunce,
So as they couthe, desired to daunce;
And I, as hole as any wight,
Up roos with joyous herte and light,
Hole and unsikke, right wele at ese,
And al forgete hadde my disese.
And to my lady wher she pleyde,
I went anone, and to hire seyde:—
'He that alle joyes, persones to plese,
Ferste ordeyned with parfite ese,
And every plesure can departe,
Sende you, madame, as large a parte,

---

[1] In Speght this line stands thus:—

'And therefore now, what I say.'

Urry has supplied the deficiency in the sense and metre by the word *loke*; but as this must be a merely conjectural emendation, Speght's being the original edition, *lo* has been here substituted, as more in accordance with Chaucer's manner.

[2] See *ante*, p. 82, note 2.

[3] Skinner supposes *duranse* to be a peculiar kind of apple, from the French *duracine*. If so, *duranse*, in the text, is the genitive case, governed by *plesaunce*; and the meaning of the sentence will be, 'All my bones desired to dance as well as they could, on account of the new pleasure infused into them by the virtue of the *duranse*, or apple.'

And of his godes swiche plente,
As he has done you of beute,
With hele and al that may be thought,
He sende you al, as he al wrought!
Madame,' quoth I, 'your servaunt trewe,
Have I ben longe, and yet wil newe,
Withoute chaunge or repentaunce,
In any wise, or variaunce;
And so wil do, as thrive I, ever.
For thing is none that me is lever
Than you to plese, how ever I fare,
Myn hertes lady, and my welfare!
My life, mine hele! my lech also
Of every thing that doth me wo!
My helpe at nede, and my surete
Of every joye that longes to me!
My succours hole in alle wise,
That may be thoughte, or man devise!
Youre grace, madame, swich have I fonde
Now in my nede, that I am bonde
To you for ever, so Christ me save!
For hele and live of you I have.
Wherfor is resoun I you serve,
With due obeysaunce til I sterve,
And dede and quikke be ever youres,
Late, erly, and at alle houres.'
Tho com my lady smale alite,[1]
And in pleyne Englische con consite.
In wordes fewe, hole hire entente
She schewed me ther, and how sche mente
To mewardes in every wise;
Holly sche com at hire devise,
Withoute processe or longe travaile,
Charging me to kepe counseile,
As I wold to her grace atteyne,
Of which commaundement I was feyne.

[1] *Smale alite* appears to mean for a short time.

Wherfor I passe over at this time,
For counseile cordes not wele in rime;
And eke the oth that I have swore
To breke, me were better unbore.
Why? for untrewe for evermore
I schold be holde, that nevermore
Of me in place shold be reporte
Thing that availe might, or comforte
To mewardes in any wise;
And ech wight wolde me dispise
In that they couthe, and me repreve;
Which were a thing sore for to greve.
Wherfor hereof more mencioun
Make I not now, ne long sermoun;
But schortly thus I me excuse,
To rime a counseil I refuse.
Sailing thus, two deyes or thre,
My lady towardes hire countre,
Over the wawes heighe and grene,
Which were large and depe betwene,
Upon a time me called and seyde,
That of my hele sche was wele peyde;
And of the quene and of the yle
She talked with me longe while,
And of al that sche ther hadde sene,
And of the state, and of the quene,
And of the ladies, name by name,
Two houres or mo; this was her game.
Til atte laste the wind gan rise,
And blewe so faste, and in swiche wise,
The schippe, that every wight can seye,
'Madame, or eve be of this deye,
And God tofore, ye shul be there,
As ye wolde feynest that ye were;
And doute not within sixe houres,
Ye shul be ther, as al is youres.'[1]

[1] That is, 'You will have arrived at that place where everything belongs to you, where you are mistress.'

At whiche wordes sche gan to smile,
And seyde that was no longe while,
That they hire sette, and up she ros,
And al aboute the schippe she gos,
And made gode chere to every wight,
Til of the land sche had a sight;
Of whiche sight glade, God it wote,
Sche was abasched and abote;[1]
And forth goth, schortely you to telle,
Wher sche accustomed was to dwelle;
And receved was, as gode righte,
With joyous chere and hertes light,
And as a glade new aventure,
Plesaunt to every creature.
With which landing tho I woke,
And fonde my chambre fulle of smoke,
My chekes eke unto the eres,
And al my body, wet with teres;
And al so feble, and in swich wise,
I was, that unneth might I rise,
So ferre travailed and so feynt,
That neither knew I kirke ne seynt;[2]
Ne what was what, ne who was who,
Ne avised what wey I wold go;
But by a venturouse grace,
I rise and walkt, sought pace and pace,
Til I a winding staire fonde,
And held the vice[3] aye in my honde;
And upward softely so gan crepe,
Til I com wher I thought to slepe

---

[1] *Abote* is from the French *abattu*, cast down. This is a curious instance of the manner in which words of French origin, when transplanted into English, followed the grammatical laws of the Anglo-Saxon.

[2] This appears to be a proverbial expression, meaning to be a perfect stranger in a place. It occurs in Robert de Brunne's translation of the *Chronicle* of Peter of Langtoft.—See *ante*, p. 82, note 1.

[3] The *vice* is the *newel*, or spindle of winding stairs, such as are still to be seen in the towers of mediæval castles and churches.

More at myn ese, and out of prees,
At my gode leyser, and in pees,
Til somwhat I recomforte were
Of the traveile and grete fere
That I endured hadde before;
This was my thought, withoute more.
And as a wight witlesse and feynt,
Withoute more, in a chambre peynt
Ful of stories olde and diverse,
More than I can now reherse,[1]
Unto a bed ful sobrely,
So as I might ful softely,
Pace after other, and nothing seyde.
Til atte laste downe I me leyde,
And as my mind wold give me leve,
Al that I dremed hadde that eve,
Befor alle I can reherse.
Right as a child at schole his verse

[1] Thus the history of the Norman Conquest was represented on the celebrated Bayeux tapestry, and that of the exploits of Guy of Warwick on hangings in Warwick Castle. The same fashion is alluded to in Skelton's satire on the luxury of the houses of prelates in the reign of Henry VIII.:—

'Building royally
Their mancyons, curiously,
With turrettes, and with toures,
With halles and with boures,
Strecching to the starres;
With glasses and with barres;
Hanging about the walles
Clothes of golde and palles;
Arras of ryche arraye,
Freshe as floures in Maye:
With dame Dyana naked;
How lystye Venus quaked
And howe Cupide shaked
His darte, and bente his bowe,
For to shote a crowe.
* * * * *
With triumphes of Cesar,' &c.—*Colin Cloute.*

The same fashion continued till Shakspeare's time. Thus Falstaff says to Mrs. Quickly, 'And for thy walls,—a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the prodigal, or the German hunting in water-work,' &c.—*2 Henry IV.* ii. 2.

Doth, after that he thinketh to thrive,[1]
Right so did I; for al my live,
I thought to have in remembraunce
Both the peyne and the plesaunce,
The dreme hole, as it me befel,
Which was as ye here me telle.
Thus in my thoughtes as I leye,
That happy, or unhappy deye,
(Wot I not, so have I blame,
Of the two, which is the name)[2]
Befel me so, that ther a thought,
By processe newe, on slepe me brought,
And me governed so in a while,
That ageine within the yle,
Me thought I was, wher of the knight,
And of the ladies I had a sight.
And were assembled on a grene,
Knight and lady, with the quene.
At which assembly ther was seyde,
How they alle contente and peyde
Were holly, as in that thing,
That the knight ther schold be king,
And they wolde alle, for sure witnesse,
Wedded be, both more and lesse,
In remembraunce withoute more;
Thus they consente for evermore.
And was concluded that the knight
Departe schold the same night;
And forthwith ther take his voiage,
To journeye for his marriage,
And returne with such an ost,
That wedded might be leste and moste.
This was concluded, writen and seled,
That it might not be repeled

[1] That is, 'As a school-boy recites his lesson after he thinks he shall be able to thrive, or succeed in saying it.'

[2] The poet does not know whether he is to call this day happy or not, for joy and sorrow are so mingled in it.

In no wise, but aye be firme,
And al schold be, within a terme,
Withoute more excusacioun,
Bothe feste and coronacioun.
This knight, which had therof the charge,
Anone into a littil barge,
Brought was late ageinst an eve,
Wher of alle he toke his leve.
Which barge was, as a man thought,[1]
After his plesure to him brought;
The quene her selfe accustomed aye
In the same barge to pleye.
It nedeth neither mast ne rother,
(I have not herd of such another,)
Ne maister for the governaunce;
Hit sayled by thoughte and plesaunce,
Withoute labour, este and weste;
Al was one, calme, or tempeste.
And I went with,[2] at his requeste,
And was the ferste preyed[3] to the feste.
Whanne he com in his countre,
And passed hadde the wawy se,
In an haven depe and large
He lefte his rich and noble barge,
And to the court, schortely to telle,
He wente, wher he wont was to dwelle;
And was receved, as gode right,
As heire, and for a worthy knight,
With all the states[4] of the londe,
Which come anone at his ferste sonde,

---

[1] Speght reads *mans*, but the context requires *man*. This miraculous barge is afterwards described as sailing according to a man's pleasure, or the intention of his mind. 'Hit sayled by thoughte and plesaunce.'

[2] The word *him* is understood. This is a common ellipsis in colloquial French. Thus we say, 'Voulez-vous que j'aille *avec*?' meaning *avec vous*.

[3] Invited.

[4] *States* means the representatives of the several orders in the state, as in the term *Etats généraux*.

With glade spirites fulle of trouthe,
Loth to do faulte, or with a slouthe
Atteinte be in any wise.
Hire riches was hire olde servise,[1]
Which ever trewe hadde be fonde,
Sith first inhabit was the londe.
And so receved they hire king,
That forgotten was no thing,
That owe[2] be done, ne mighte plese,
Ne their sovereyne lord do ese.
And with hem so, schortely to seye,
As they of custome had done aye,
For seven yere paste was and more,
The father, the old, wise, and hore
King of the land toke his leve
Of alle his barounes on an eve;
And told hem how his deyes paste
Were alle, and comen was the laste;
And hertely preyed hem to remembere,
His sone, which yonge was and tendre,
That borne was their prince to be,
If he returne to that countre
Mighte, by adventure or grace,
Within any time or space.
And to be trewe and frendly aye,
As they to him had bene alweye.
Thus he hem preyde, withoute more,
And toke his leve for evermore.
Knowen was, how tendre in age,
This yonge prince a grete viage
Uncouthe and straunge, honoures to seche,
Toke in honde with littil speche;
Which was to seke a princes,
That he desired more than riches,

[1] Their long service ensured to them that respect which is usually paid to riches.

[2] *Owe* is the present tense of *ought*.

For hire grete name that floured so,
That in that time there was no mo
Of hire estate, ne so wele named,
For borne was none that ever hire blamed
Of which princes somwhat before,[1]
Here have I spoke, and som wil more.
So thus befel as ye shulle here;—
Unto hire lord they made such chere,
That joye was ther to be presente
To see hire trouthe and how they mente,
So very glade they were echone,
That hem among ther was no one,
That desired more riches,
Than for hire lord such a princes,
That they might plese, and that were feyre;
For faste desired they an heyre,
And seyde grete surety were, ywis.[2]
And as they were speking of this,
The prince himselfe him avised,
And in pleyne Englische undisguised,[3]
Hem showed hole his journey,
And of hire counseyle gan them preye;
And told how he ensured was,
And how his day he might not passe,
Without diffame and grete blame,
And to him for evere shame;
And of hire counseyle and avise,
Ther he prayth hem ones or twise;

---

1 This princess was the queen of the island, of whom he has already spoken.

2 An heir would ensure the stability of the government, and prevent the disorders in the state which ensue upon a disputed succession. The citizens of Saluce, in *The Clerk of Oxenford's Tale*, exhibit the same anxiety.—See vol. ii. p. 129.

3 English now at length began to be the language of the court and aristocracy; but its use was still far from universal; for the circumstance of the prince having addressed his council in *plain English* is here spoken of with commendation, as a proof of his nationality. Edward the Third's predecessors would have spoken in French.

And that they wolde, within ten deyes,
Avise and ordeyne him swiche weyes,
So that it were no displesaunce,
Ne to this relme over grete grevaunce;
And that he have might to his feste,
Sixty thousande atte leste.
For his intent within schorte while
Was to returne unto his yle
That he com fro, and kepe his deye,
For nothing wold he be aweye.
To counseyle tho the lordes anone,
Into a chambre, everychone,
Togithere wente,[1] hem to devise,
How they mighte beste and in what wise,
Purveye for hire lordes plesaunce,
And the relmes continuaunce
Of honour, which in it before
Had continued evermore.
So atte laste they fonde the weyes,[2]
How within the next ten deyes,
Al might with peyne and diligence
Be done; and caste what the dispence
Might drawe, and in conclusioun,
Made for ech thing provisioun.
Whanne this was done, holly tofore
The prince, the lordes alle before
Come, and schewed what they hadde done;
And how they couthe by no reson
Finde, that within the ten deyes
He might departe by no weyes;
But wold be fiftene, atte leste,
Or he returne might to his feste.

[1] To go together, or stand together, has a technical meaning in law, expressive of consultation. Thus the crier in our common law courts says, or used to say, to the jury, 'Good men and true, stand together, and hear the evidence.'

[2] This is also a technical word, as in our expression a committee of ways and means. The use of these terms indicates Chaucer's parliamentary experience.

And schewed him every resoun why
It might not be so hastely
As he desired, ne his dey
He might not kepe by no wey,
For divers causes wondre grete.
Which whanne he herde, in swich an hete
He fel for sorwe, and was seke,
Stille in his bed hole that weke,
And neigh the tother, for the schame,
And for the doute, and for the blame
That mighte on him be arette.
And ofte upon his breste he bette,
And seyd, 'Alas! myn honour for aye,
Have I here lost clene this day!
Dede wolde I be! alas, my name
Shal aye be more hennesforth in schame,
And I dishonoured and repreved,
And never more schall be beleved!'
And made swich sorwe, that in trouthe,
Him to beholde it was grete routhe.
And so endured the deyes fiftene,
Til that the lordes, on an evene,
Him come, and tolde they redy were;
And shewed in fewe wordes there,
How and what wise they had purveyde
For his estate, and to him seyde,
That twenty thousand knightes of name,
And fourty thousand withoute blame,
Alle come of noble ligne,
Togidere in a compaigne,
Were logged on a riveres side,
Him and his plesure ther tabide.
The prince tho for joye up ros,
And wher they logged were, he gos,
Withoute more, that same nighte,
And ther his soper made to dighte;
And with hem bode til it was deye.
And forthwith, to take his journeye,

Leving the streight, holding the large,
Til he com to his noble barge.
And whanne this prince, this lusty knight
With his poeple in armes brighte,
Was comen where he thought to passe,
And knew wele none abiding was
Behind, but alle were ther presente,
Forthwith anone al his intente
He told hem ther, and made his cries[1]
Thorugh his oste that deye twise,
Commaunding every lives wight,
Ther being present in his sight,
To be the morwe on the rivage,
Wher he beginne wold his viage.
The morwe com, the cry was kepte,
Fewe was ther that night that slepte,
But trussed and purveyed for the morwe,
For faulte of schippes was al hire sorwe;
For sauf the barge, and othere two,
Of schippes ther saugh I no mo.
Thus in their doutes as they stode,
Wexing the se, comming the flode,
Was cried, 'To schippe go every wight!'
Thanne was but hye that hye might,[2]
And to the barge, me thought, echone
They wente, withoute was left not one,
Horse, male, trusse, ne bagage,
Salade, spere, gardebrace, ne page,[3]

---

[1] 'Caused his proclamation to be made.' 'Pendant ce temps se faisoyent les *cris* par les roys d'armes et heraux, aux quatre coings de la lice.'—*Mem. d'Olivier de la Marche*, liv. i.

[2] Then there was nothing for it but that every one should hasten that hasten could. These familiar phrases add great spirit to Chaucer's descriptions.

[3] The *salade* was a small round helmet. 'D'autre part saillit messire Jacques de Lalain armé, sa cotte-d'armes vestue: et en sa teste avoit une petite *salade* de guerre, toute ronde, et avoit le visage et le col tout decouvert.'—*Mem. d'Olivier de la Marche*, liv. i. *Garde-brace* is merely a corruption of the French *garde-bras*, a piece of armour for the arm: —— 'et fut ateint ledict de Compays sur le grand garde-bras.'—*Ibid.*

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But was logged and roome ynough.
At which schipping me thought I lough,
And gan to merveile in my thought,
How ever swich a schippe was wrought.
For what poeple that can encrese,
Ne never so thikke might be the prese,
But alle hadde roome at hire wille;
Ther was not one was logged ille.
For, as I trow, my selfe the laste
Was one, and logged by the maste;
And wher I loked I saugh such rome,
As alle were logged in a towne.
Forth goth the schippe, seyde was the crede;
And on hire knes, for hire good spede,[1]
Downe kneled every wight a while,
And preyede faste that to the yle
They mighte come in safety,
The prince and al the compaigny,
With worschippe and withoute blame,
Or disclaundre of his name,
Of the promise he shold retourne,
Within the time he did sojourne,
In his londe biding his oste;
This was their preyer of leste and moste.
To kepe the deye it might not bene,
That he appointed hadde with the quene,
To returne withoute slouthe,
And so assured hadde his trouthe.
For whiche fault this prince, this knight,
During the time, slept not a-night;
Swich was his wo and his disese,
For doute he schold the quene displese.

---

[1] In the Salisbury *Breviary* there is a form of prayer to be used by those who are about to set out upon a journey. On the coast of Devonshire the fishermen still adhere to the mediæval custom of beginning the herring voyage by a religious service: and sailors generally prefer leaving port on Sundays, because they think they will have the benefit of the prayers offered in the churches.

Forth goth the schippe with swiche spede,
Right as the prince for his grete nede
Desire wold after his thoughte,
Til it unto the yle him broughte;
Wher in hast upon the sande,
He and his poeple toke the lande,[1]
With hertes gladde, and chere light,
Wening to be in heven that night.
But, or they passede a while,
Entring inne towardes that yle,
Al clade in blakke, with chere pitous,
A lady, which never dispitous
Hadde be in alle hire life tofore,
With sory chere, and herte to-tore,
Unto this prince wher he gan ride,
Com and seyde, 'Abide, abide!
And have no hast, but faste retourne!
No resoun is ye here sojourne,
For your untrouth hath us distried!
Wo worth the time we us allied
With you, that are so soone untrewe!
Alas, the day that we you knewe!
Alas, the time that ye were bore,
For al this londe by you is lore!
Acursed be he you hider brought,
For al oure joye is turned to nought.[2]
Youre acqueintaunce we may compleyne,
Which is the cause of al oure peyne.'
'Alas, madame!' quoth tho this knight,
And with that from his hors he light,
With colour pale, and chekes lene,
'Alas! what is this for to mene?
What have ye seyde? why be ye wrothe?
You to displese I wolde be lothe.

[1] This idiom is still preserved in the expression used with respect to the Lord Mayor, who is said to *take the wuter* at London Bridge.

[2] Speght reads *your*, but *oure* is manifestly required by the context.

Knowe ye not wele the promesse
I made have to youre princesse?
Which to perfourme is myn intente,
So mote I speed, as I have mente.
And as I am hire very trewe,
Withoute chaunge or thoughte newe,
And also fully hire servande,
As creature or man livande[1]
May be to lady or princesse;
For she myn heven, and hole richesse
Is, and the lady of myn hele,
My worldes joye and al my wele!
What may this be? whennes cometh this speche?
Telle me, madame I you beseche!
For sith the ferste of my living,
Was I so fereful of nothing,
As I am now to here you speke;
For doute I fele myn herte breke.
Seye on, madame, telle me youre wille?
The remenaunt is it gode or ille?'
'Alas!' quod she, 'that ye were bore!
For, for youre love, this land is lore;
The quene is dede, and that is routhe,
For sorwe of youre grete untrouthe.
Of two partes of the lusty route
Of ladyes, that were ther aboute,
That wonte were to talke and pleye,
Now are dede and clene aweye,
And under erth tane logging newe.
Alas, that ever ye were untrewe!
For whanne the time ye sette was paste,
The quene toke[2] counseyle sone in haste,
What was to do; and seyde grete blame,
Youre acqueintaunce cause wolde and schame;

---

[1] *Servande* and *livande* are the present participles of the verbs *to serve* and *to live*, and follow the Anglo-Saxon form.

[2] Speght reads *to*, which is evidently a misprint for *toke*; the latter has, therefore, been adopted in the text.

And the ladyes of hire avise
Preyed,[1] for nede was to be wise,
In eschewing tales and songes,
That by hem make wolde ille tonges;[2]
And seye they were lightly conqueste,
And preyed to a pore feste,
And foule hadde hire worschipe weived,
Whanne so unwisely they conceived,
Hire riche tresor, and hire hele,
Hire famous name, and hire wele,
To putte in swiche an aventure;[3]
Of which the sclaundre ever dure
Was like, withoute helpe of appele.
Wherfor they nede hadde of counsele,
For every wight of hem wolde seye,
Hire closed yle an open weye
Was become to every wight,
And wele appreved by a knight,

---

[1] That is, 'Asked the ladies for their advice.'

[2] In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, society was in that stage of its progress when the great are particularly exposed to popular satire. Refinement had not yet drawn so wide a distinction between the habits and sympathies of the various classes as to place the higher orders above the reach of such lampoons as the minstrel might disseminate in the course of his wanderings from castle to castle, and from fair to tournament. The following is the first verse of a curious satirical ballad on Richard, King of the Romans, brother to Henry III., on the occasion when they were taken prisoners, together with Prince Edward, by Simon de Montfort, at the battle of Lewes, in the year 1264. It is printed in *Political Songs*, edited by Mr. Wright for the Camden Society:—

'Sitteth alle stille, and herkneth to me:
The Kyng of Alemaigne, bi mi leaute
Thritti thousende pounde askede he
For to make the pees in the countre,
And so he dude more.
Richard, thah thou be ever trichard,
Further shal thou nevermore.'

[3] 'And say that they were easily overcome, and had been invited to but a poor entertainment; and that they had been disgracefully forgetful of the respect due to themselves, when they consented to put their rich treasure, &c., into such jeopardy.'

Which he, alas! withoute paysaunce,
Had sone acheved thobeisaunce.
Al this was moved at counseyle thrise,
And concluded dayly twise,
That bet was dye withoute blame,
Than lose the riches of hire name.
Wherfor the dethes acqueintaunce
They chese, and lefte have hire plesaunce,
For doute to live as repreved,
In that they you so sone beleved.
And made their othes with one accorde,
That ete, ne drinke, ne speke worde,
They sholde never, but ever weping
Bide in a place withoute parting;
And use their dayes in penaunce,
Withoute desire of allegeaunce.[1]
Of which the trouth anone con preve;
For why? the quene forth with hire leve
Toke, at hem alle that were presente,
Of hire defautes, fully repente,[2]
And dyed ther, withouten more;
Thus are we loste for evermore.
What scholde I more hereof reherse?
Cometh[3] withinne, cometh se hire herse;
Wher ye schal se the pitous sight,
That ever yet was schewen to knight.
For ye schalle se ladyes stonde,
Ech with a grete rod in honde,
Cladde in blak, with visage white,
Redy ech othere for to smite,
If any be that wil not wepe;
Or who that makes countenaunce to slepe,

[1] Alleviation.

[2] The meaning appears to be, 'The queen immediately, with their leave, received the penitential confession (*repente*, like the French *repentir*) of the faults of all those who were present; and then died.'

[3] Speght reads *comen*, and is followed by Urry; but the context seems to require the imperative, *cometh*.

They be so bet, that al so blewe
They be as cloth that dyed is newe.[1]
Swich is hire parfite repentaunce;
And thus they kepe hire ordinaunce,
And wille do ever to the dethe,
While hem endures any brethe.'
This knight tho in armes tweyne,
This lady toke and gan her seyne,
'Alas, my birth! wo worth my life!'
And even with that he drew a knife,
And thorugh gowne, doublet, and sherte,
He made the blode come from his herte,
And sette him downe upon the grene,
And ful repente[2] closed his ene;
And sauf that ones he drewe his brethe,
Withoute more, thus he toke his dethe.
For whiche cause the lusty host,
Which in a battaile on the cost,
At ones for sorwe swich a crye
Gan rere thorow the compaignye,
That to the heven herd was the sowne,
And under therth als fer adowne;
That wilde bestes for the fere,
So sodeynly afrayed were,
That for the doute, while they might dure,
They ronne as of their lives unsure,
From the woodes unto the pleyne.
And from the valleys the heigh mountaine

[1] This is an allusion to those penitential flagellations of which Chaucer had probably himself witnessed a curious example. 'Quo quidem anno (1350) venerunt in Angliam penitentes viri nobiles, et alienigenæ, qui sua nuda corpora usque ad effusionem sanguinis, nunc flendo, nunc canendo, acerrime flagellabant; tamen. ut dicebatur, nimis hoc faciebant inconsulte, quia sine licentiâ sedis apostolicæ.'—WALSINGHAM. There is a letter from the Pope to Edward III., of the date of 1349, warning him against these flagellants.—See *Epist. Secret.*, p. 104, apud Odor. Rainal. This discipline, however, under certain restrictions, continued to be part of the rule of some religious orders.

[2] *Repente* is the past participle, from the French *repenti*. 'Having fully repented, he closed his eyes.'

They soughte, and ronne as bestes blinde,
That clene forgotten hadde hire kinde.
This wo not cesed, to counseyle wente
Thise lordes, and for that lady sente;
And of avise what was to done,
They hire besoughte sche seye wolde sone.
Weping ful sore, al clad in blak,
This lady softely to hem spak,
And seyde, 'My lordes, by my trouthe,
This mischefe it is of your slouthe;
And if ye hadde, that juge wolde right,
A prince that were a very knight,
Ye that ben of astate echone,
Dye for his faute sholde one and one.
And if he holde had the promesse,
And done that longes to gentilnesse,
And fulfilled the princes beheste,
This hastyf arme[1] had bene a feste,
And now is unrecoverable,
And us a sclaundre aye durable.
Wherfor I seye, as of counsaile,
In me is none that may availe;
But if ye liste for remembraunce,
Purveye and make swich ordinaunce,
That the quene that was so meke,
With alle hire women, dede or seke,
Mighte in youre land a chapelle have,
With some remembraunce of hire grave,
Shewing hire ende with the pite,
In some notable olde cite,
Neigh unto an heighe weye,
Wher every wight might for her preye,
And for alle hires that have ben trewe.'
And even with that sche changed hewe,

[1] Speght reads *hastie forme*, which is evidently corrupt. The letter *f* of *hastif* was probably carried on by mistake to the following word by the ignorant transcriber. *Hastif arme*, or *erme*, means *sudden grief*. The meaning of the passage is, 'If the knight had held his promise, &c., instead of this sudden grief, we should have been celebrating a feast.

And twise wishede after the death,
And sighte, and thus passed hire brethe.
Thanne seyde the lordes of the oste,
And so conclude leste and moste,
That they wolde ever in houses of thak,[1]
Their lives lede, and were but blak,
And forsake alle hire plesaunces,
And turne al joye to penaunces.
And bare the dede prince to the barge,
And namede hem sholde han the charge.
And to the herse wher leye the quene,
The remenaunt wente and down on kneen,
Holding hire hondes on heigh, gonne crye,
'Mercy, mercy!' everich thrye;[2]
And cursed the time that ever slouthe
Sholde han swich masterdom of trouthe.
And to the barge, a longe mile,
They bare hire forth; and in a while
Alle the ladies, one and one,
By compaignyes were broughte echone,
And past the se, and toke the land,
And in new herses, on a sand,
Putte and broghte were alle anone,
Unto a cite closed with stone,
Wher it hadde ben used aye
The kinges of the land to leye,
After they reigned in honoures;
And writ was which were conqueroures,
In an abbeye of nonnes blake,
Which accustomed were to wake,
And of usage rise ech a night,[3]
To preye for every lives wight.
And so befel as in the guise,
Ordeynt and seyde was the servise,

[1] They determine that, for a penance, they will live in thatched sheds, instead of in regular houses.

[2] Perhaps this is an allusion to the threefold repetition of the *Kyrie eleison* in the Church service.

[3] Matins were said at midnight by the religious.

Of the prince and of the quene,
So devoutly as mighte bene.
And after that about the herses,
Many orisons and verses,
Withoute note,[1] ful softely,
Seyde were and that ful hertely;
That al the night til it was deye
The poeple in the chirche conne preye,
Unto the holy Trinite,
Of those soules to han pite.
And whanne the nighte past and ronne
Was, and the newe deye begonne,
The yonge morwe with rayes redde,
Which from the sunne over al con spredde,
Atempered clere was and faire,
And made a time of holsom aire,
Befel a wonder cas and straunge
Among the poeple, and gan change
Sone the worde and every woo
Unto a joye, and som to two.
A bridde, al fedred blewe and grene,
With brighte rayes like gold betwene,
As smal thred over every joynt,
Al ful of colour straunge and coynt,
Uncouth and wondreful to sighte,
Upon the quenes herse con lighte,
And song ful lowe and softely,
Thre songes in hire harmony,
Unletted of every wight.
Til atte laste an aged knight,
Which semed a man in grete thoughte,
Like as he set al thing at nought,
With visage and eyen al forwepte,
And pale, as man longe unslepte,
By the herses as he stode,
With hasty hondling of his hode

[1] Yet the Officium Defunctorum, or office for the dead, was generally sung.

Unto a prince that by him past,[1]
Made the bridde somwhat agast.
Wherfor she ros and lefte hire songe,
And departe from us amonge,
And sprad hire winges for to passe
By the place he entred was,
And in his hast, schortly to telle,
Him hurt, that bakkeward downe he fel,
From a window richly peynte,
With lives of many divers seynte,
And bette his winges and bledde faste,
And of the hurt thus dyed and paste;
And leye ther wele an houre and more.
Til, atte laste, of briddes a score
Come and semblede at the place
Wher the window broken was,
And made swiche waimentacioun,
That pite was to here the soun,
And the warbles of hire throtes,
And the compleynte of hire notes,
Which from joy clene was reversed;
And of hem one the glas sone persed,
And in his beke, of coloures nine,
An herbe he brought, flourelesse, al grene,
Ful of smale leves, and pleyne,
Swart and long with many a veyne.
And wher his felow leye thus dede,
This herbe down leyde by his hede,
And dressed it full softely,
And hong his hede and stode therby.
Which herb in lesse than halfe an houre,
Gan over al knitte, and after floure

[1] This old knight frightened the bird by suddenly doffing his hood to a prince who was passing by. A hood, exactly such as are now worn in our universities, was the common covering for the head in the fourteenth century, as may be seen in the portraits of Chaucer, Petrarch, Dante, and others. When men sat in large halls and churches, with windows imperfectly glazed, such a covering was indispensable to preserve them from draughts.

Ful oute; and wexe ripe the sede.
And, right as one another fede
Wolde, in his beke he toke the greyne,
And in his felowes beke certeyne
It put, and thus within the thridde
Up stode, and pruned him the bridde,
Which dede hadde be in al oure sight;
And bothe togither forth hire flight
Toke, singing, from us, and their leve;[1]
Was none disturbe hem wolde ne greve.
And, whanne they parted were and gone,
Thabbesse the sedes sone echone
Gadred had, and in hire hande
The herbe sche toke, wele avisande
The lefe, the sede, the stalke, the floure,
And seyde it had a gode savoure,
And was no common herbe to finde,
And wele approved of uncouth kinde,
And than other more vertuouse;
Who so have it might for to use
In his nede, floure, lefe, or greyne,
Of hire hele might be certeyne.
And leyde it downe upon the herse
Wher leye the quene, and gan reherse,
Echone to other that they had sene.
And, taling thus,[2] the sede wex grene,
And on the dry herse gan springe,
Which me thought a wondrous thing;
And, after that, floure and newe sede,[3]
Of which the poeple alle toke hede,
And seyde, it was som grete miracle,
Or medicine fine more than triacle;

---

[1] The incident of the bird and the grain is found in the Grecian fabulous history.—See HYGINUS. *Fab.* CXXXVI. *de Polyido.* In the *Lay of Elidus*, one of those attributed to Marie, a weasel is in the same way the means of disclosing the properties of a medicinal herb:—See ELLIS. [2] That is, 'Whilst they were thus talking.'

[3] *Floure* and *sede* are verbs in the infinitive, governed by *gan* in the preceding sentence.

And were wele done ther to asseye,
If it might ese, in any weye,
The corses, which with torche light,
They waked[1] hadde ther al that night.
Sone did the lordes ther consente,
And al the poeple therto contente,
With esye wordes and littil fare,
And made the quenes visage bare,
Which shewed was to alle aboute,
Wherfor in swoone fel hole the route,
And were so sory, moste and leste,
That longe of weping they not ceste;
For of hire lord the remembraunce,
Unto hem was swich displesaunce,
That for to live they called a peyne,
So were they very trewe and pleyne.
And after this the gode abbesse,
Of the greyne gan chese and dresse
Thre, with her fingers clene and smale,
And in the quenes mouth, by tale,
One after other, ful esily
Sche putte, and ful conningly.
Which shewed sone swich vertue,
That preved was the medicine trewe.
For with a smiling countenaunce
The quene upros, and of usaunce
As sche was wonte, to every wight
Sche made gode chere; for whiche sight,
The poeple, kneling on the stones,
Thoughte they in heven were, soule and bones:
And to the prince, wher that he leye,
They wente to make the same assaye.
And whanne the quene it understode,
And how the medicine was gode,
Sche preyed sche might have the greynes,
To releve him from the peynes,

[1] For the custom of waking the dead, see vol. i. p. 183, note 1.

Which sche and he hadde bothe endured.
And to him went and so him cured,
That, within a littil space,
Lusty and fresch on live he was,
And in gode hele, and hole of speche,
And lough, and seyde, 'Gramercy, leche!'
For which the joye thorughout the toune
So grete was that the belles soune
Afrayed the poeple, a journeye
Aboute the cite every weye;
And come and axed cause, and why
They rongen were so stately?
And after that the quene, thabbesse,
Made diligence, or they wolde cesse,
Swich, that of ladyes sone a route
Sewing the quene was al aboute;
And, called by name echone and tolde,
Was none forgetten yonge ne olde.[1]
Ther mighte men se joyes newe,
Whanne the medicine, fine and trewe,
Thus restored had every wight,
So wele the quene as the knight,
Unto parfite joye and hele,
That fleting they were in swich wele
As folk that wolde in no wise,
Desire more perfit paradise.
And thus, whanne passed was the sorwe,
With mikel joye, sone on the morwe,
The king, the quene, and every lord,
With alle the ladies, by one accord,
A general assemble
Gret[2] crye thorugh the countre;

[1] Sir Harris Nicolas has incorrectly substituted *shewing* for *sewing*, thus making the sentence unintelligible. The meaning is, 'After that, the Queen and the Abbess were so diligent [*scil.*, in administering a grain of the seed to the dead ladies], that, before they stopped, there was a crowd of ladies following [sewing] the Queen: and when all were counted, none was forgotten, neither young nor old.'

[2] Speght reads *great*, which is evidently incorrect. Urry attempts

The which. after, as hire intente,
Was turned to a parlemente,
Wher was ordeyned and avised
Every thinge, and devised,
That plese might to moste and leste.
And ther concluded was the feste,
Within the yle to be holde
With ful consente of yonge and olde,
In the same wise as before,
As thing shold be, withouten more.
And schipped and thither wente,
And into straunge relmes sente
To kinges, quenes, and duchesses,
To divers princes and princesses,
Of hire linage, and conne preye,
That it might like hem at that deye
Of mariage, for hire sporte,
Come se the yle, and hem disporte.
Wher sholde be joustes and turnayes,
And armes done in other wayes;[1]

---

to improve it by a total alteration of the structure of the sentence, and in so doing violates the sense, the metre, and the genius of Chaucer's language:—

'Helde a generall assembly.
Gret cry was made through the country.'

Great is probably an ignorant attempt to modernize *gret* or *gert*, the past tense of *to garre*, to cause, the letter *r* and the vowel preceding it being often transposed; as from thurste, thruste; berste, breste, &c.

[1] It was usual to hold jousts and tournaments at the marriages of persons of rank, and that of John of Gaunt was actually accompanied by a very romantic display of this description. 'Moreover this year' (1359, a fortnight after the young Earl of Richmond's marriage) 'in the Rogation week was solemne justs enterprised at London; for the Maior, and his four and twentie brethren as challengers did appoint to answer all commers, in whose name and steed the King with his foure sonnes, Edward, Lionell, John, and Edmund, and ninetene other greate Lords, in secret manner came and held the field with honour, to the great pleasure of the citizens that beheld the same.'—HOLINSHED. The quaint old Olivier de la Marche, gives an account of the *pas d'armes* performed at the marriage of Charles of Burgundy and Margaret of York, sister to Edward IV., in the year 1474. Monsieur le Bastard de Bourgogne, was supposed to defend a 'Tree of Gold,' belonging to 'the Lady of the Concealed Island.' This constituted

Signifying, over al, the deye
After Aprille within May.
And was avised that ladyes tweyne,
Of gode estate and wele beseyne,
With certeine knightes and squieres,
And of the quenes officeres,
In maner of an embassade,
With certeyne lettres, closed and made,
Sholde take the barge and departe,
And seke my lady, every part,
Til they hire fonde, for any thing;[1]
Both charged have quene and king.
And as hire lady and maistres,
Hire to beseke of gentilnes,
At the deye ther for to bene.
And ofte hire recommaunde the quene,[2]
And preyes, for alle loves, to haste,
For, but sche com, al wol be waste,

---

the 'mystery,' as it was called, of the *pas d'armes*. The following describes the opening of the proceedings:—

'La place de la jouste fut drécée sur le marché de Bruges; et fut toute close, qu'il n'y avoit que deux entrées; sinon pour celui jour seulement, que Monsieur Adolf de Clèves (qui devoit ouvrir et commencer le pas) avoit fait faire une entrée au droit de là, ou il se devoit armer. Et pour estre mieux averti de la cause de ceste emprise, Monsieur le Bastard de Bourgogne fonda son pas sur un géant qu'un nain conduisoit prisonnier, enchaisné, dont la cause de sa prison est declarée en une lettre, laquelle lettre un poursuyvant nomme Arbre-d'or (qui se disoit serviteur de la dame de l'Isle Celée) avoit apportée à Monsieur le Duc; et aussi par un chapitre baillé á mon dict seigneur.' On one of the pillars of the lists, the mystery of the tournament is announced in the following lines:—

'De ce perron nul ne prenne merveille;
C'est une emprise qui nobles cueurs réveille,
Au service de la tant honorée
Dame d'honneur, et de l'Isle Celée.'

It will be observed that in this fiction of the lady of the unknown island there is a resemblance to the allegory of this poem. It was probably common in romances.

[1] This appears to be equivalent to the law-phrase, Anything to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding

[2] *Hire* is the dative case. 'And to recommend the Queen often *to her*.'

And the feste, a besinesse
Withoute joye or lustinesse.
And toke hem tokenes,[1] and gode spede
Preyde God to sende, after hire nede.
Forth wente the ladyes and the knightes,
And were out fourtene dayes and nightes,
And broughte my lady in hire barge,
And hadde wele spedde and done hire charge.
Wherof the quene, so hertely glade
Was that in sothe swich joye sche hade,
Whanne the schippe approchede londe,
That sche my lady on the sonde
Mette, and in armes so constreyne,
That wondre was beholde hem tweyne;
Which, to my dome, during twelve houres,
Neither for hete, ne watry shoures,
Departed not no compaigny,[2]
Saving hemselfe, but none hem by,
But gaf hem leyser at hire ese,
To reherse joye and disese,
After the plesure and courages,
Of hire yonge and tendre ages.
And after, with many a knight,
Broughte were, wher as for that night
They parted not, for to plesaunce,
Content was herte and countenaunce,
Both of the quene, and my maistresse;
This was that night their besinesse.
And on the morwe, with huge route,
This prince, of lordes him aboute,
Com and to my lady seyde,
That of hire coming wele apayde
He was, and ful conningly
Hire thanked, and ful hertely;

[1] The ambassadors carried with them tokens, or credentials, from the King and Queen.

[2] 'Whom no company *parted* during twelve hours,' &c. *Departed* is here an active verb, governing whom.

And lough and smiled, and seyde, ywis,
That was in doute, in safety is.[1]
And commaunded do diligence,
And spare for neither gold ne spence,
But make redy, for on the morwe,
Wedded, with seint Johan to borwe,
He wolde be, withouten more,
And lete hem wyte this lesse and more.
The morwe com, and the servise
Of mariage in swich a wise
Seyde was, that with more honour,
Was never prince ne conquerour
Wedde, ne with such compaigny,
Of gentilnesse in chivalry;
Ne of ladyes so grete routes,
Ne so beseyne as al aboutes
They were there, I certifye
You on my life, withouten lye.
And the feste holde was in tentis,
As to telle you myn entent is,
In a rome a large pleyne[2]
Under a wode, in a champeyne,
Betwixe a river and a welle,
Wher never had abbeye, ne selle
Ben, ne kirke, hous, ne village,
In time of any mannes age.
And dured thre monethes the feste,
In one estate, and never ceste,
From erly the rising of the sonne,
Til the deye spente was and yronne,
In justing, dauncing, and lustinesse,
And al that sowned to gentilnesse.
And as me thought the second morwe,
Whanne ended was al olde sorwe,
And in surety every wight
Hade with his lady slepte a night,

[1] 'That *which* was in doubt.'
[2] This is, perhaps, a misprint for 'a rome (roomy) *and* large pleyne.'

The prince, the quene, and al the rest,
Unto my lady made request,
And hire besoughte ofte and preyed,
To mewardes to be wele apayed,
And considere myn olde trouthe,
And on my peynes have routhe,
And me accepte to hire servise,
In swiche forme and in swiche wise,
That we bothe mighte be as one;
Thus preyed the quene, and everichone.
And for ther sholde be no nay,
They stinte justing al a dey,
To preye my lady and requere,
Be contente and oute of fere,
And with gode herte make frendly chere;
And seyde it was a happy yere.
At which sche smiled and seyde, ywis,
'I trowe wele he my servaunt is,
And wolde my welfare, as I trist,
So wolde I his, and wolde he wist
How, and I knew that his trouthe
Continue wolde withoute slouthe,
And be swich as ye here reporte,
Restreyning both courage and sporte,
I couthe consente at youre requeste,
To be named of youre feste,
And do after youre usaunce,
In obeying youre plesaunce.
At youre requeste this I consente,
To plese you in youre entente;
And eke the sovereine above,
Commaunded hath me for to love,
And befor other him preferre,
Ageinst which prince may be no werre,
For his power over all reigneth,
That other wold for nought him peineth.
And sith his wille and youres is one,
Contrary in me shal be none.'

Tho, as me thoughte, the promesse
Of mariage, befor the messe,[1]
Desired was of every wight,
To be made the same night,
To putte awey al maner doutes,
Of every wighte theraboutes.
And so was do; and, on the morwe,
Whanne every thought and every sorwe
Disloged was out of myn herte,
With every wo and every smerte,
Unto a tente, prince and princes,
Me thought, brought me and my maistres,
And seyde we were at fulle age
Ther to conclude our mariage,
With ladyes, knightes, and squieres,
And a grete ost of ministeres;
With instrumentes and sounes diverse,
That longe were here to reherse.
Which tente chirche perochial[2]
Ordeint was in especial

[1] 'It was desired by every one that the promise of marriage or betrothal should be made immediately.' This was the civil marriage, and always preceded the religious ceremony, which consisted of the Benediction of the newly married, and of a Mass offered on their behalf, at which they communicated. Hence the distinction in the canons between a marriage *per verba de presenti* and *per verba de futuro*. This may be illustrated from de la Marche's letter, already quoted:—

'A l'arrivée, et quand ils (Charles and Margaret) se veirent l'un l'autre, ils se firent moult grand honneur: et puis s'assirent sur un banc, ou ils deviserent longuement ensemble; et apres plusieurs devises, monsieur l'evesque de Salsbery (qui toujours avoit mené ceste matière) se vint mettre à genoux entre eux deux, et les mit en plusieurs gracieux devis, et assez tost après vint Monsieur le Comte de Charny, qui dit telles parolles: 'Monsieur, vous avez trouvé ce que vous avez tant quis et désiré; et puis que Dieu vous a amené ceste noble dame, au port de salut et à vostre désir, il me semble que vous ne devez point départir sans monstrer la bonne affection que vous avez á elle, et qu' á ceste heure vous la devez fiancer, et luy faire promesse. . . . Et sur ce propos les prit l'evesque par les deux mains, et les fiança: et ainsi se partit, pour ceste fois mon dict seigneur, et lendemain s'en retourna a Bruges'—*Mem. d'Oliv. de la Marche.*

[2] The tent was made a parochial church expressly for this occasion,

For the feste and for the sacre.
Wher archbishop, and archdiacre
Songe ful oute the servise,
After the custome and the gise,
And the chirches ordinaunce.
And, after that, to dine and daunce
Broughte were we, and to divers pleyes,[1]
And for our spede ech with preyes;
And mery was moste and leste,
And seyde amended was the feste;[2]
And were right glade, lady and lord,
Of the mariage and thaccord;
And wished us hertes plesaunce,
Joye, hele, and continuance.
And to the menestrels made requeste,
That, in encresing of the feste,
They wolde touche hire cordes,
And, with som new joyeux accordes,
Meve the poeple to gladnesse;
And preyden, of al gentilnesse,

---

because it was only at parochial churches the nuptial benediction could be given, except by special licence from the Ordinary.

[1] These *pleyes* may possibly have been games of forfeits, &c.; but more probably the interludes which are ridiculed in *The Midsummer Night's Dream*. De la Marche, in his description of the marriage, already quoted, gives a detailed account of these curious entertainments, which he calls *entremets*. 'Celuy jour fut le banquet conduit de vingt quatre plats, moult grans, et moult somptueux: et n'y avoit autre pareure sur les tables pour celuy soir; et assez tost après fut veu au bout de la table, en la salle, un hourd encourtiné; et sur ce hourd, commencerent trompettes a sonner, et sur ce fut la courtine tirée. Et là se commencerent à monstrer les figures des douze travaux d'Herculès, dont le premier s'ensuyt. Premierement fut veu Herculès en son bers, et sa nourrice, qui luy donnoit la mammelle; et au plus près, le bers de son frere jumeau; et sa nourrice (qui le tenoit et portoit chaufer au feu) luy donnoit le tetin, et l'emmaillotoit, et faysoit maniere de nourrice à enfans,' &c.—*Mem. d'Oliv. de la Marche*, liv. ii.

[2] In all Chaucer's pictures of the manners of the great there is a high tone of courtesy and good nature, which gives a favourable idea of the Courts of Edward III. and Richard II., from which he drew them. Here all the company are represented as complimenting the newly married, and declaring that their nuptials had added new lustre to the entertainment.

Ech to peyne hem for the deye,
To shewe his cunning and his pleye.
Tho beganne sownes mervellouse,
Entuned with accordes joyouse,
Rounde aboute alle the tentes,
With thousandes of instrumentes,
That every wight to daunce them peyned;[1]
To be merry was none that feined,
Which sowne me troubled in my slepe,
That fro my bedde forth I lepe,
Wening to be atte feste;
But whanne I woke al was ceste,
For ther nas lady ne creature,
Sauf on the walles old portreiture,

---

[1] Of the minstrelsy used on such occasions there is an example in de la Marche's curious description. A tower is placed in the middle of the dining-hall, on the top of which is a watchman, who calls out his several musicians to perform on their respective instruments. First, at each window appears a wild boar with a trumpet, and all sound a grand flourish. Next appear a he-goat and three she-goats playing upon *une trompette saquebout*, or *schalmayes*, upon which they perform a *motet*. Next appear wolves, who play on flutes. 'Pour la quatrième fois demanda la guette ses chantres; et là s'apparurent quatre gros asnes, moult bien faicts, lesquels dirent un chanson de musique à quatre pars, faicte a ce propos, qui se disoit ainsi:—

Faictes vous l'asne, ma maitresse?
Cuidez vous, par vostre rudesse,
Que je vous doive abandonner?
Jà pour mordre, ne pour ruer,
Ne m'aviendra que je vous laisse.
Pour manger chardon comme asnesse,
Pour porter bas, pour faix, pour presse,
Laisser ne puis de vous aimer.
'Faictes vous l'asne?

'Soyez farsante ou moqueresse,
Soit lascheté ou hardiesse,
Je suis faict pour vous honorer.
Et donc me devez vous tuer,
Pour avoir le nom de meurdresse?
'Faictes vous l' asne?

. . . et sur ce poinct furent les tables ostées et levées, et la dance commença.'

This, or some similar farce, may possibly have suggested Bottom, the Weaver's, transformation.

Of horsmen, haukes, and houndes,
And hurte dere fulle of woundes,
Som like bitten, som hurt with schot,[1]
And, as my dreme semed, that was not.[2]
And whanne I wake, and knewe the trouthe,
And ye hadde sene, of very routhe,
I trowe ye wolde have wept a weke;
For, never man yet halfe so seke,
I went, escaped with the life,
And was for faute that swerde ne knife
I find ne might my life tabrigge,
Ne thing that kerved, ne hadde edge,
Wherwith I might my wofulle peynes
Have voided with bleding of my veynes.
•Lo, here my blisse! lo, here my peyne!
Which to my lady I do compleyne!
And grace and mercy her requere,
To ende my wo and besie fere,
And me accepte to hire servise,
After hire servise in swich avise,
That of my dreme the substaunce
Might turne ones to cognisaunce;
And cognisaunce to very preve,
By fulle consente, and gode leve.
Or elles, withoute more I preye,
That this night, or it be deye,
I mote unto my dreme returne,
And sleping so forth aye sojourne
About the Yle of Plesaunce,
Under my ladyes obeisaunce,
In hire servise, and in swich wise,
As it plese hire may to devise;
And grace ones to be accepte,
Like as I dremed whanne I slepte,
And dure a thousand yere and ten,
In her gode wille. Amen, amen.

[1] See *ante*, p. 94, note 1.

[2] 'That which had appeared in my dream had no real existence.'

Feirest of feire, and godliest on live!
Al my secret to you I pleyne, and shrive,
Requering grace, and of compleynt,
To be heled or martyred as a seint;
For by my trouthe I swere, and by this boke,
Ye may both hele, and sle me with a loke.

Go forth myn owne trewe herte innocent,
And with humblesse do thyn observaunce;
And to thy lady, on thy knees, presente
Thy servise newe; and think how grete plesance
It is to live under thobeysance
Of hire that may, with hire lokes softe,
Give the the blisse that thou desirest ofte.

Be diligent, awake, obeye and drede,
And be not to wild of thy countenaunce,
But meke, and glade, and thy nature fede
To don ech thing that may don hire plesaunce.
Whanne thou dost slepe, have aye in remembraunce
Thimage of hire, which may with lokes softe
Give the the blisse that thou desirest ofte.

And, if so be that thou hire name finde
Written in boke or elles upon walle,
Loke that thou do, as servaunt trewe and kinde,
Thyn obeysaunce, as sche were therwithalle,
Feyning in love is breding of a falle
From the grace of hire whos lokes softe
May give the blisse that thou desirest ofte.

Ye that this balade rede schalle
I preye you, kepe you fro the falle.[1]

EXPLICIT.

[1] Speght places the whole of the above stanzas at the end of *Chauceres Dreme*, as if they were a species of *Envoy*. That arrangement is here followed; but the connexion is not apparent.

CHAUCERES A. B. C.

CALLED

LA PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.

[THIS poem was first printed by Speght in his edition of 1597, where it appears deformed by the corruptions of orthography generally found in the printed books of that period. The text has been, as far as possible, purified and restored to some degree of conformity with the grammatical and metrical structure of the other poems.

There was a tradition current, in Speght's time, that the *A. B. C.* was written 'at the request of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, as a prayer for her private use, being a woman in her religion very devout.' This vague report, however inconclusive, has been deemed sufficient to determine the position of the *A. B. C.* between the *Dreme*, which refers to the marriage of the Duchess, and *The Boke of the Duchesse*, which relates to her death.

The *A. B. C.* is a prayer to the Blessed Virgin somewhat in the manner of an acrostic. It consists of twenty-three stanzas, each of which begins with one of the letters of the alphabet, arranged in their order. The Lamentations of Jeremiah are divided in the same manner, and probably suggested the idea. The attributes ascribed to the Mother of our Lord are chiefly derived from the anagogical interpretation of Scripture, which had been handed down from the Fathers.]

A.

ALMIGHTY and al merceable Quene,
To whom al this world fleeth for succour
To have relees of sinne, of sorwe, of tene!
Glorious Virgine, of alle flouris floure,
To the I fle, confounded in errour!
Helpe, and releve, almighty debonaire,[1]

[1] *Debonaire* is here used as a substantive.—See vol. iv. p. 162, note 1.

Have mercy of myn perilous langour!
Venquist me hath my cruel adversaire.

B.

Bounte so fixe hath in thy herte his tente
That wele I wote thou wil my succour be;
Thou canst not werne that, with gode entente,
Axith thyn helpe, thyn herte is ay so fre![1]
Thou art largesse[2] of pleyne felicite,
Haven and refute[3] of quiete and reste!
Lo! how that thevis seven[4] chasen me!
Helpe, Lady brighte, or that my schippe[5] to-breste!

C.

Comfort is none, but in you, Lady dere!
For lo, myn sinne and myn confusioun,
Which oughte not in thyn presence for to apere,
Han taken on me a grevous actioun,[6]
Of verrey right and disperatioun!
And, as by right, they mighten wele sustene,
That I were worthy myn damnatioun,
Nere mercy of you, blisful quene!

---

[1] That is, 'Thou canst not refuse one that, with pure intention, asketh thy help.'

[2] *Largesse*, the abstract quality, is put for the concrete, meaning 'Thou that art largesse, or liberality itself.'

[3] This is probably taken from the Litany, called that of Loretto, in which the Blessed Virgin is addressed as Refugium peccatorum.

[4] The seven deadly sins. The allusion is probably to the parable of the Good Samaritan, in which the man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho is generally interpreted by the Fathers to mean the human soul; and the thieves, who left him naked and wounded, the seven deadly sins, which despoil it of divine grace, and impair its power of choosing virtue.

[5] It is the Church, not, as here, an individual Christian, which is generally compared to a ship. Thus, in the English office for baptism:—'that he (the catechumen) being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church; and being steadfast in faith, &c., may so pass the waves of this troublesome world,' &c.

[6] *Actioun* seems to mean control, from the verb to *acte*, to drive (agere).

D.

Doute is ther none, Quene of misericorde,[1]
That thou nart cause of grace and mercy here;
God vouchedsafe through thee with us to accorde:
For certis, Christis blisful modir dere!
Were now the bowe bent[2] in swiche manere,
As it was ferste, of justice and of ire,
The rightful God wolde of no mercy here;
But thorugh the han we grace as we desire.

E.

Ever hath myn hope of refute in the be:
For here beforne ful ofte in many a wise,
Unto mercy hast thou received me.
But mercy, Lady! at the grete assise,
Whanne we shalle come before the heigh justise!
So litel frute shal than in me ben founde,
That, but thou or that day correcte me,
Of verrey right myn werke wil me confounde.[3]

F.

Flying, I fle for succour to thyn tente,
Me for to hide fro tempeste ful of drede,
Beseking you, that ye you not absente,
Though I be wikke. O help yet at this nede!
Al have I ben a beste in witte and dede,
Yet, Lady! thou me close in with thyn grace,
Thyn enemy and myne,[4] Lady, take hede!
Unto myn dethe in poynt is me to chase.

---

[1] Thus in the Salisbury *Breviary* the Antiphon used from Trinity to Advent began, Salve Regina, mater misericordiæ.

[2] That is, 'If the bow of God's justice and anger were now bent, as it was before His Incarnation,' &c. There is an allusion to Psalm vii., 13, 'If a man will not turn, he will whet his sword; he hath *bent his bow*.'

[3] This sentiment recalls the verse from the *Dies Iræ*:—

'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Quum vix justus sit securus?'

[4] *Scil.*, Satan.

G.

Graciouse mayde and modir! which that never
Were bitter nor in erthe nor in se,[1]
But ful of sweetnesse and of mercy ever,
Helpe, that myn fader be not wroth with me!
Speke thou, for I ne dare him not se;
So have I done in erthe, alas the while!
That certes, but if thou myne succour be,
To sinke eterne he will mine ghost exile.

H.

He vouchedesafe, telle him, as was his wille,
Become a man as for our alliaunce,[2]
And with his blode he wrote that blisful bille
Upon the crosse, as general acquitaunce[3]
To every penitent, in full creaunce:
And therefore, Lady bright! thou for us preye,
Then shalt thou stente al his grevaunce,
And maken our foe to failen of his preye.

I.

I wote wele thou wilt ben oure succour,
Thou art so ful of bounte in certeyne;
For, whanne a soule falleth in errour,
Thyn pite goth and haleth him ageyne,
That maketh thou his pees with his sovereyne,
And bringest him out of the crooked strete:
Who so the loveth shal not love in veyne,
That shal he finde, as he the life shal lete.

K.

Kalenderis enlumined[4] ben they
That in this world ben lighted with thyn name,

---

[1] There appears to be an allusion to the name of Mary, or Miriam, supposed to mean bitter.

[2] To ally God and man; to restore man to communion with God.

[3] There appears to be an allusion to Col. ii. 14.

[4] An allusion to the custom of writing the high Festivals of the Church in the Calendar with red, or illuminated, letters; whence they are commonly called in our Universities 'Red-letter days.'

And who so goth with the the righte weye,
Him schal not drede in soule to ben lame;
Now, Quene of comfort! sith thou art the same,
To whom I seche for my medicine,
Let not myn fo no more myn wounde entame;
Myn hele into thyn honde al I resine.

L.

Lady, thyn sorwe[1] can I not portreye
Under that crosse, ne his grevous pennaunce:
But, for your bothis peyne, I you preye,
Let not our alder fo make his bostaunce,
That he hath in his lestis, with mischaunce,
Convicte that ye both han bought so dere;[2]
As I seyde erst, thou ground of substaunce!
Continue on us thine pitouse eyen clere.

M.

Moyses that saugh the bosh of flambis rede
Brenning, of which than never a stikke brende,
Was signe of thyn unwemmed maidenhede.
Thou art the bosh, on which ther can descende

---

[1] This recals to mind the hymn attributed to Innocent III., beginning:—

'Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lachrymosa,
Dum pendebat filius.—See vol. ii. p. 34.

[2] That is, 'But I pray that, in consideration of the pain which both of you suffered, you allow not the foe of us all (our alder fo) to boast that he hath, according to his desires, (may evil befal him!) convicted that [*scil.*, my soul] which you have both bought so dear.'

The same idea is embodied in the following curious verses of the time of Edward I., published by Mr. Wright in his *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*:—

'Lutel wot hit any mon
Hou love Hym haveth ybounde
That for us on the rode ron,
And bohte us with His wounde;
The love of Hym haveth us ymaked sounde
And yeaste the grimly gost to grounde.
Ever and oo, night and day, He haveth us in his thohte;
He nul nout leose that He so deore bohte.'

The Holy Ghost, which that Moyses wende
Had ben on fire: and this was in figure.[1]
Now, Lady! from the fire us defende,
Which that in helle eternally shal dure.

N.

Noble princesse, that never haddest pere!
Certes if any comfort in us be,
That commeth of thee, Christis moder dere!
We han none other melody ne gle,
Us to rejoyce in our adversite,
Ne advocate none, that wil and dare so preye
For us, and that for as litel hire as ye,
That helpen for an Ave Mary or tweye.

O.

O, very light of eyen that ben blinde!
O very lust of labour and distresse!
O tresorere of bounte to mankinde,
The whom God chese to moder for humblesse!
From his ancelle[2] he made the maistresse
Of heven and erth, our bille up to bede;
This world awaiteth ever on thyn goodnes,
For thou ne failedest never wight at nede.

P.

Purpos I have somtime for to enquere,
Wherfor and why the Holy Ghost the sought,
Whanne Gabrielis vois com to thyn ere;
He not to werre us swiche a wonder wrought,

---

[1] See *The Tale of the Prioresse*, vol. iii. p. 108. The same thought occurs in an ancient alliterative hymn, published by Warton:—

Heil sterre, that never stunteth liht,
Heil bush brenning, that never was brent.

St. Bernard is fond of discovering these allegorical meanings in the historical passages of the Old Testament. 'Hanc enim sacerdotalis virga, dum sine radice floruit; hanc Gedeonis vellus, dum in medio siccæ areæ maduit; hanc in Ezechielis visione Orientalis porta, quæ nulli unquam patuit, præsignabat.'—S. BERNARD'S *Serm. in Apoc.* c. xii.

[2] In allusion to the answer of the blessed Virgin to Gabriel, Ecce ancilla Domini.—Luke i. 38.

But for to save us, that sithen us bought:
Than needeth us no weapon us to save,
But onely ther we did not as us ought,[1]
Do penitence, and mercy aske and have.[2]

Q.

Quene of comforte, right whanne I me bethink,
That I agilte have bothe him and the,
And that myn soule is worthy for to sinke,
Alas! I, caitife, wheder shal I fle?
Who shal unto thyn Sone myne mene[3] be?
Who, but thyn selfe, that art of pite welle?
Thou hast more routhe on our adversite,
Than in this world might any tonge telle.

R.

Redresse me, Moder, and eke me chastise!
For certeynly my faderes chastising
Ne dare I not abiden in no wise,
So hidous is his ful reckening.[4]
Moder! of whom our joye gan to springe,
Be ye myn juge, and eke my soules leche,
For ever in you is pite aboundinge
To eche that of pite wil you beseche.

S.

Sothe is, he ne graunteth no pite
Withoute the; for God of his godenesse
Forgiveth none, but it like unto the:
He hath the made vicaire and maistresse

---

[1] *Ought* is the past tense of the verb *to owe*. 'As us ought' means, therefore, 'As belonged to us, or became us.'

[2] The poet says, 'Inasmuch as Christ has redeemed, or bought us, therefore all that is necessary for our salvation is to repent of what we have done amiss, and ask and have mercy.'—See Matt. vii. 7.

[3] *Mene* signifies mediator.

[4] The power of the blessed Virgin was supposed to extend only to temporal rewards and punishments, and to the obtaining of grace during this life; the poet, therefore, prays her to chastise him by afflictions in this world rather than suffer him to fall into the eternal punishment due to unrepented sin.

Of al this world, and eke governeresse
Of heven; and represseth his justise
After thyn wille: and therfore in witnesse
He hath the crowned in so ryal wise.[1]

T.

Temple[2] devoute! ther God ches his wonning,
Fro which these misbeleeved deprived been,
To you myn soule penitent I bringe,
Receve me, for I can no ferther fleen.
With thornis venemouse,[3] hevene Quene!
For which the erth accursed was ful sore,
I am so wounded, as ye may wel sene,
That I am lost almost, it smert so sore,

V.

Virgine! that art so noble of appareyle,
That ledest us into the heighe toure
Of Paradise, thou me wisse and counseyle,
How I may have thy grace and thy succoure:
Al have I ben in filth and in errour,
Lady! on that countrey thou me adjourne,
That cleped is thyn bench of fresche flour,
Ther as that mercy ever shal sojourne.

X.

Xp̄e[4] thine Sone that in this world alight
Upon a crosse to suffere his passioun,

[1] St. Bernard interprets the 'Woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,' *Apoc.* xii., to mean the Mother of Christ. Egredimini, filiæ Sion, et videte regem Salomonem in diademate, quo coronavit eum mater sua. Verum hoc aliàs. Interim sane ingredimini magis, et videte reginam in diademate quo coronavit eam Filius suus. In capite, inquit, ejus corona stellarum duodecim.—S. BERNARD—*Apoc.* xii.

[2] St. Paul calls all Christians the Temple of God.—1 Cor. iii. 16.

[3] By the thorns are meant sins. Thus, in medieval pictures, our Lord is represented, in His character of the Good Shepherd, as extricating a lost sheep from the briars and thorns in which it had entangled itself.

[4] Sir Harris Nicolas has changed this contracted word into *Xen*, without any authority. It is a contraction for *Christe*, the X being the Greek χ, and the p, the Greek P, or r.

And suffred eke that Longeus his herte pight,[1]
And made his herte blode renne adoun,
And al this was for my salvacioun:
And I to him am fals and eke unkind,

---

[1] There is an old tradition that the soldier who pierced our Lord's side with his lance (John, xix. 34) was a certain blind man, named Longius, or Longinus; that his hands were imbrued with the blood and water which flowed from the wound along the shaft, and, that on his accidentally rubbing his eyes with them, his sight was restored. The miracle is thus represented in *The Chester Plays*, edited by Mr. Wright for the Shakspeare Society:—

'CAYPHAS.

'Longes, take the speare in hande
And put from thee, thou ney wounde.

'LONGEUS.

'O Lorde I see ney sea nor lande
This seven yeaire in good faye.

'QUARTUS JUDÆUS.

'Have this speare, and take goode heede,
Thou must doe as the bushoppe thee bede
A thing that is of full greate nede,
To warne I hold you woode.

'LONGYUS.

'I will doe as ye bide me,
But on your perill it shall be;
What I doe I may not see,
Whether it be evil or good.
[*Tunc* LONGIUS *lanceâ perforat latus Christi, dicens*:—
'Highe king of heaven I thee praye,
What I have done well wote I nere,
But on my haudes, and on my speare,
Out water ronneth through;
And on my eyes some can fall,
That I may see both on and all,
O Lorde, wherever be this wall [well]
That this watter come froo?
Alas! alas! and wayleawaie!
What deed have I done to daie?
A man I see, south to saye
I have slain in the streete.
But this I hope be Christe vereye,
That sicke and blynde has healed aye;
Of mereye Lorde, I thee praie
For I wiste not what I did.'

And yet he wil not myn dampnacioun:
This thanke I you, succour of al mankind!

Y.

Ysaac was figure of his dethe certeyne,[1]
That so fer forth his fader wold obeye,
That him ne rought nothing for to be sleyen:
Right so thy Sone list, as a lambe, to deye:[2]
Now, Lady ful of mercy! I you preye,
Sith he his mercy sured me so large,
Be ye not scant, for al we singe or seye,
That ye ben fro vengeaunce aye our targe.

Z.

Zacharie you clepith the open welle,
That wischte sinful soule out of his gilte;[3]
Therfor this lesson oute I wil to telle,
That, nere thyn tender herte,[4] we were spilte.
Now, Lady brighte! sith thou canst and wilt
Ben to the sede of Adam merciable,
Bringe us to that paleis that is builte
To penitentis, that ben to mercy able.[5]

EXPLICIT.

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[1] For this figurative interpretation there is the authority of S. Paul. —Heb. xi. 19.

[2] Thus S. John Baptist exclaims, 'Behold the Lamb of God.'—John i. 36.

[3] Zechariah xiii. 1.

[4] That is, 'Were it not for thy tender heart.'

[5] That is, 'That have such dispositions as render them fit subjects to obtain the mercy of God.'

THE BOKE OF THE DUCHESSE;

OR, THE DETHE OF BLANCHE.

[THIS piece was commonly known as *Chauceres Dreme* till the publication by Speght, in 1597, of the poem to which that name more properly belongs. All subsequent editors have implicitly followed the corrupt text of Speght. The present edition is the first in which *The Boke of the Duchesse* has been collated, it being generally supposed that there was no MS. of it in existence. The MS. with which this collation has been made is contained in a miscellaneous volume marked 16 in the Fairfax collection, Bod. Lib.[1] It is on parchment, beautifully illuminated, and may be assigned to the beginning or middle of the 15th century. A comparison with Speght's text will show that the variations are numerous and important. There is another MS. of this poem in the Bodleian, marked 638. It is partly on parchment and partly on paper, and is evidently a copy of the former.

In this poem Chaucer again resorts to his favourite framework of a dream. Falling asleep over Ovid's story of Ceyx and Halcyone, he hears the merry sounds of huntsmen and hounds, and starts from his bed to follow them to the woods. Here, while awaiting the unharbouring of the deer, he sees a knight sitting dolefully under an oak, lamenting the recent death of his lady. Having ascertained the cause and history of his sorrow, Chaucer rides home, and is suddenly awakened by the sound of the great clock of a neighbouring castle striking twelve. The knight is John of Gaunt; and the lady his Duchess, Blanche. The identity of the latter is ascertained by a passage where she is called 'faire White,' which, says the mourning knight, 'was my ladyes name righte.'

This determines the date of the poem, which must have been written between 1369, when the Duchess died, and Michaelmas, 1371, when John of Gaunt married his second wife, Constance, daughter of Peter the Cruel of Spain, at Bourdeaux.]

[1] See *post*, p. 192.

I HAVE grete wondre, be this lyghte,
How that I lyve; for day ne nyghte
I may nat slepe welnygh nought.
I have so many an ydel thought,
Purely for defaulte of slepe,
That, by my trouthe I take no kepe
Of nothing, how hyt commeth or gooth,
Ne me nys nothynge leve nor looth;
Al is ylyche gode to me,
Joye or sorwe, wher so hyt be.
For I have felynge in nothynge,
But, as it were a mased thynge,
Alway in poynt to falle adoun;
For sorweful ymagynacioun
Is alwey hooly in my mynde.
And wel ye woote, ageines kynde
Hyt were to lyven in this wyse;
For nature wolde not suffyse,
To noone ertherly creature,
Not longe tyme to endure
Withoute slepe, and be in sorwe.
And I ne may, ne nyghte ne morwe,
Slepe; and thys melancholye
And drede I have for to dye,
Defaulte of slepe and hevynesse,
Hath sleyne my spirite of quyknesse,
That I have loste al lustyhede;
Suche fantasies ben in myn hede,
So I not what is best to doo.[1]
But men myght axe me, why soo

[1] The reader will have observed that Chaucer often, as in this case, concludes the sense with the first line of a couplet. Leigh Hunt says that he derived this peculiarity from the French; but the whole structure of his octosyllabic verse is taken from the Anglo-Norman Romances. The Saxon poetry is written in the alliterative verse of which *The Visions of Piers Ploughman* are an example. The resumption of the narrative in the second line of the distich has somewhat of the fine effect of a fugue in music, in which the phrase, while it is being closed by one class of voices, is heard simultaneously breaking out again from

I may not slepe, and what me is.[1]
But nathelesse, who axeth this,
Leseth his axing trewely;
My selven cannot telle why
The soothe; but trewely as I gesse,
I hold it be a sickenesse
That I have suffred this eighte yere,
And yet my boot is never the nere.
For there is phisicien but one,[2]
That may me hele, but that is done;
Passe we over until efte;
That wil not be, mote nedes be lefte;
Our first matere is gode to kepe.
So whanne I saugh I might not slepe,
Now of late this other night
Upon my bed I sate upright,
And bade one reche me a boke,
A romauns,[3] and he it me toke
To rede, and drive the night aweye:
For me thought it better pleye,
Than either atte chesse or tables.
And in this boke were written fables,
That clerkes hadde in olde time,
And other poets, put in rime,

---

another class, in a different part of the scale. Milton, a student of Chaucer, frequently uses it, with great effect, in the *Comus*:—

> 'The star that bids the shepherd fold
> Now the top of heaven-doth hold;
> And the gilded car of day
> His glowing axle doth allay
> In the steep Atlantic stream;
> And the slope sun his upward beam
> Shoots against the dusky pole,
> Pacing toward the other goal
> Of his chamber in the east.
> Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,' &c.

[1] This and the succeeding sixty-four lines in the MS. having been destroyed, or omitted, have been supplied in a modern hand.

[2] *Scil.*, his lady.

[3] This romance, as appears from what follows, was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

To rede, and for to be in minde,
While men loved the law of Kinde.[1]
This boke ne spak but of swiche thinges,
Of quenes lives, and of kinges,
And many other thinges smale.
Among al this I fonde a tale,
That me thoughte a wondre thing.
This was the tale:—There was a king
That highte Seys; and had a wife,
The best that mighte bere life,
And this quene hight Alcyone.[2]
So it befel, therafter sone,
This king wol wenden over se.
To tellen schortely, whanne that he
Was in the se, thus in this wise,
Swich a tempest gan to rise,
That brak hire mast, and made it falle,
And cleft hire schippe, and dreynt hem alle,
That never was fonde, as it telles,
Bord, ne man,[3] ne nothing elles.
Right thus this king Seys lost his life.
Now for to speke of Alcyone his wife:—
This lady that was left at home,
Hath wondre that the king ne come
Home, for it was a longe terme.
Anone hire herte began to yerne;
And for that, hire thought evermo
It was not wele; hire thoughte so.[4]
She longed so after the king,
That certes it were a pitous thing
To telle hire hertely sorweful life,
That she hadde, this noble wife.

---

[1] The law of kind is the law of nature, meaning, perhaps, natural religion as opposed to revealed.

[2] For the story of Ceyx and Halcyone see Ovid.—*Metamorph.* xi.

[3] In Ovid the body of Ceyx is found by Halcyone, who throws herself into the sea for grief, when both are changed into king-fishers.

[4] 'It seemed so to her.'

For him, alas! she loved alderbeste,
Anone sche sent both este and weste
To seke him, but they fonde him nought.
'Alas,' quod she, 'that I was wrought!
Whether my lord, my love, be dede?
Certes I nil never ete brede,
I make avow to my God here,
But I mowe of my lord here.'
Swich sorwe this lady to her toke,
That trewely I, that made this boke,
Had suche pite and suche routhe
To rede hir sorwe, that by my trouthe
I ferde the worse al the morwe
And after, to thenken on hir sorwe.
So whanne this lady koude here noo worde,
That no man myghte fynde hire lord,
Ful ofte she swowned, and seyde, 'Alas!'
For sorwe ful nygh woode she was;
Ne she koude no rede but oon,
But doune on knees she sate anoon,
And wepte, that pitee was to here.
'A! mercy, swete lady dere!'
Quod she, to Juno hir goddesse,
'Helpe me out of thys distresse,
And yeve me grace my lord to se
Soone, or wete wher so he be,
Or how he fareth, or in what wise;
And I shal make you sacrifise,
And hooly youres become I shal,
With gode wille, body, herte, and al.
And, but thow wilte this, lady swete,
Sende me grace to slepe and mete
In my slepe somme certeyne swevene,
Wher thorgh that I may knowe evene
Whether my lord be quyke or dede.'
With that worde she henge downe the hede,
And fel a swowne, as cold as stoon.
Hire women caughte hire up anoon,

And broughten hir in bedde al naked;
And sche, for weped and for waked,[1]
Was wery; and thus the dede slepe
Fil on hir, or she toke kepe,
Thorugh Juno, that had herde hir bone,
That made hir to slepe sone.
For as she prayede, ryght so was done
Indede; for Juno ryght anone
Called thus hir messagere[2]
To do hir errande, and he come nere.
Whanne he was come, she bad hym thus:—
'Go bet,'[3] quod Juno, 'to Morpheus;
'Thou knowest hym wel, the god of slepe;
Now understonde wel, and take kepe.
Seye thus on my halfe, that he
Go faste into the grete se,
And bydde him that, on alle thynge,
He take up Seys body, the kynge,
That lyeth ful pale, and nothynge rody.
Bidde hym crepe into the body,[4]
And doo hit goon to Alcyone
The quene, ther she lyeth allone;
And shew hir shortely, hit ys no nay,
How hit was dreynt thys othere deye;
And do the body speke ryght soo,
Ryght as hyt was woned to doo,
The whiles that hit was alyve;—
Goo now faste, and hye the blyve.'
This messager toke leve and wente
Upon hys weye, and never ne stente

---

[1] For this peculiar construction see vol. i. p. 188, note 2.
[2] Iris. [3] See vol. iii. p. 81, note 1.
[4] The idea of Morpheus creeping into the body emanates evidently from the Gothic, rather than the classic mind:—

'Iri, meæ, dixit, fidissima nuncia vocis,
Vise soporiferam Somni velociter aulam,
Extinctique jube Ceÿcis imagine mittat
Somnia ad Halcyonem veros narrantia casus.
Metamorph. xi. 585.

Til he come to the derke valeye,
That stant betwexe roches tweye.
Ther never yet grew corne ne gras,
Ne tre, ne nought that oughte was,
Beste, ne man, ne nought elles,
Save that there were a fewe welles
Come rennyng fro the clyffes adowne,
That made a dedely slepynge sowne;
And ronnen downe ryght by a cave,
That was under a rokke ygrave
Amydde the valeye, wondre depe.
Ther these goddys leye and slepe,
Morpheus and Eclympasteyre,[1]
That was the god of slepes eyre,
That slepe, and did noon other werke.
This cave was also as derke
As helle pitte, over al aboute,
They had goode leyser for to route,
To envye who myght slepe beste.
Some henge her chyn upon hir breste,
And slepte upryght hir hede yhedde;
And some laye naked in her bedde,
And slepe whiles the dayes laste.
This messager come fleynge faste,
And cried, 'O ho! awake anoon!'
Hit was for nought, ther herde hym none.
'Awake!' quod he, 'Who lythe there?'
And blew his horne ryght in here ere,
And cried, 'Awaketh!' wonder hye.
This god of slepe, with hys one ye

[1] It is difficult to conceive where Chaucer could have found this name. Tyrwhitt places it among the list of words whose meaning he has not been able to discover. But we may venture to consider it a Greek word (ἐκλιμπάστηρ), which cannot however be traced to classical authors, formed from ἐκλιμπάνω, the transitive form of ἐκλείπω, one of the meanings of which is *to cease, to die*. *Eclympasteire* would then mean *death*, he who causes man's life to cease. Sleep is somewhere called cousin to death; death may therefore be called sleep's heir.

Cast up, and axed, 'Who clepeth there?'[1]
'Hyt am I,' quod this messagere.
'Juno bad thou shuldest goon.'
And tolde hym what he shulde doon,
As I have tolde yow here tofore,
Hyt ys no nede reherse hyt more;
And went hys wey whan he had sayede.
Anoon this god of slepe abrayede
Out of hys slepe, and gan to goon,
And dyd as he had bede hym doon;
Toke up the dreynt body sone,
And bar hyt forth to Alcyone
Hys wife, the quene, ther as she lay,
Ryght even a quarter befor day,
And stode ryght at her beddes fete,
And called hir ryght as she hete
By name, and sayede:—'My swete wife,
Awake! lete be your sorwful lyfe!
For in youre sorwe ther lyth no rede;
For certes, swete, I am but dede,
Ye shul me never on lyve yse.
But, gode swete herte, loke that ye
Bury my body; for, suche a tyde,
Ye mowe hyt fynde the see besyde.
And farewel swete, my worldes blysse!
I praye God youre sorwe lysse;
To lytel while oure blysse lasteth!'
With that hir eyen up she casteth,

---

[1] The difference between the old Italian and Gothic, or mediæval, mind is curiously exemplified in Chaucer's rendering of this passage. Iris enters the cave;—

'Quo simul intravit, manibusque obstantia vergo
Somnia dimovit; vestis fulgore reluxit
Sacra domus: tardâque deus gravitate jacentes
Vix oculos tollens; iterumque iterumque relabens
Summaque percutiens nutanti pectora mento
Excussit tandem sibi se: cubitoque levatus
Quid veniat (cognorat enim) scitatur: at illa,
Somne, quies rerum, placidissime Somne deorum,' &c.
Metamorph. xi. 616.

And saugh nought:—'Alas!' quod she, for sorwe,
And deyed within the thridde morwe.
But what she sayede more in that swowe,
I may not telle yow as now,
Hyt were to longe for to dwelle;
My first matere I wil yow telle,
Wherfore I have tolde you this thynge,
Of Alcyone, and Seys the kynge.
For thus moche dar I seye welle,
I had be dolven[1] every delle,
And dede, ryght thorugh defaulte of slepe,
Yif I ne had redde, and take kepe
Of this tale next before;
And wol I telle yow wherfore,
For I ne myght, for bote ne bale,[2]
Slepe, or I had redde thys tale
Of this dreynte Seys the kynge,
And of the goddis of slepynge.
Whanne I had redde thys tale wel,
And overloked it everydel,
Me thoughte wondre yf hit were so;
For I had never herde speke, or tho,
Of noo goddis, that koude make
Men to slepe, ne for to wake;
For I ne knewe never God but oon.
And in my game I sayede anoon,
(And yet me lyst ryght evel to pleye,)
Rather than that I shulde deye
Thorugh defaulte of slepynge thus,
I wolde give thilke Morpheus,
Or hys goddesse, dame Juno,
Or somme wight ellis, I ne rought who,
To make me slepe, and have some reste,—
I wil yive hym the alder beste

[1] *Dolven*, the past participle of to *delve*, to dig, meaning, he *buried*, like the German *vergraben*.

[2] For this peculiar form, see vol. i. 241, 1.

Yift, that ever he abode hys lyve.
And here onwarde, ryght now as blyve,
Yif he wol make me slepe a lyte,
Of downe of pure dowves white,
I wil yif him a federbedde,
Rayed with golde, and ryght wel cledde,
In fyne blak satyn de owter mere,[1]
And many a pelowe, and every bere
Of clothe of Reynes[2] to slepe on softe,
Him thar not nede to turnen ofte.[3]
And I wol yive hym al that fallys[4]
To a chaumbre; and al hys hallys,
I wol do peynte with pure golde,
And tapite hem ful manyfolde,
Of oo sute;[5] this shall he have,
Yf I wiste where were hys cave,
Yf he kan make me slepe sone,
As did the goddesse, quene Alcyone.
And thus this ylke god Morpheus
May wynne of me moo fees thus
Than ever he wanne: and to Juno,
That ys hys goddesse, I shal soo do,
I trowe that she shall holde hir payede.
I hadde unnethe that worde ysayede,
Ryght thus as I have tolde hyt yow,
That sodeynly, I nyste how,

---

[1] A sort of satin, so called because imported from beyond sea.

[2] This is Rennes, in Bretagne, where there was a manufactory of cloth. The pelowe-bere was the pillow case, which the poet says shall be made of this costly cloth. Thus, in *The Squier of Low Degree*:—

'Your blankettes shal be of fustyane,
Your shetes shal be of cloth of Rayne.'

[3] This description is taken from that of the couch of Somnus, in the passage from Ovid already quoted:—

'At medio torus erat, ebeno sublimis in atrâ,
Plumeus, atricolor, pullo velamine tectus.'—*Met.* xi. 609.

[4] *Falle* here means to become, or be suitable for. Chaucer promises to give the god all that is suitable for his hall.

[5] Tapestry hangings of manifold thickness would be a peculiarly acceptable present to the god of sleep, because they would deaden all sound. This idea is not found in Ovid.

Suche a luste anoon me tooke
To slepe, that ryght upon my booke
I fil aslepe; and therwith evene
Me mette so ynly[1] swete a swevene,
So wondreful, that never yitte
I trowe no man had the wytte
To konne wel my sweven rede.
No, not Joseph, withoute drede,
Of Egypte, he that radde so,
The kynges metynge, Pharao,[2]
No more than koude the lest of us.
Ne nat skarsly Macrobeus,[3]
He that wrote al thavysyon
That he mette of king Scipion,
The noble man, the Affrikan,
Such merveiles fortuned than,
I trowe arede my dremes even.
Loo, thus hyt was; thys was my sweven.
Me thoughte thus, that it was May,
And in the dawenynge, ther I laye
Me mette thus in my bed al naked,
And loked forth, for I was waked
With smale foules, a grete hepe,
That had afrayed me oute of my slepe,
Thorugh noyse and swetenesse of her songe.
And as me mette, they sate amonge[4]
Upon my chaumbre roofe wythoute,
Upon the tyles over al aboute;
And songe everyche in hys wyse
The moste solempne servise
By noote, that ever man, I trowe,
Had herde. For somme of hem songe lowe,

---

[1] *Inly* means *inwardly*, hence thoroughly, deeply.

[2] The direct construction is, 'Pharaoh, the kinges meting.'—See Gen. xli.

[3] See vol. iv. 189, note 1.

[4] *Amonge* means here and there, or at intervals. Thus, 'They danced and sung among,' would be the phrase for singing between the dances. It is often used in this adverbial sense by the Elizabethan writers.

Somme highe, and al of oon acorde.
To telle shortly at oo word,
Was never herde so swete a stevene,
But hyt had be a thynge of hevene,
So mery a soune, so swete entewnes,
That, certes, for the toune of Tewnes,[1]
I nolde, but I had herde hem synge,
For al my chaumbre gan to rynge,
Thorugh syngynge of her armonye;
For instrument nor melodye
Was no where herde yet halfe so swete,
Nor of acorde halfe so mete.
For ther was noon of hem that feyned
To synge, for eche of hem hym peyned
To fynde oute of mery crafty notys;
They ne spared not her throtys.
And, sothe to seyne, my chaumbre was
Ful wel depeynted, and with glas
Were alle the wyndowes wel yglasyd
Ful clere, and nat an hoole ycrased,
That to beholde hyt was grete joye.
For holy al the story of Troye
Was in the glasynge ywrought thus;
Of Ector, and of kynge Priamus,
Of Achilles, and of kynge Lamedon,
And eke of Medea and Jason,
Of Paris, Eleyne, and of Lavyne;
And alle the wallys, with colouris fyne
Were peynte, bothe text and glose,
And al the Romaunce of the Rose.[2]

---

[1] Tunis, a rich trading sea-port town.

[2] In the middle ages it was the business of the architect not only to design the building, but to decorate it with appropriate paintings. Paulus Jovius relates that a series of freseo paintings still remained in 1547, on the walls of a magnificent palace built by Otho, Duke of Milan, in 1277, to commemorate a signal victory by which peace was restored to the city:—'Extantque adhuc in maximo testudinatoque conclavi, incorruptæ præliorum cum veris ducum vultibus imagines, *Latinis elegis* singula rerum elogia indicantibus.'—*Vit. Vicecomit.*

My windowes were shette echone,
And thorugh the glas the sonne shone
Upon my bedde with bryghte bemys,
With many glade, gilde stremys;
And eke the welken was so faire,
Blewe, brighte, clere was the ayre,
And ful attempre, for sothe, hyt was;
For nother to colde nor hoote hyt nas,
Ne in al the welkene was a cloude.
And as I lay thus, wondre lowde
Me thought I herde a hunte[1] blowe,
Tassay hys horne, and for to know
Whether hyt were clere, or horse, of soune.
And I herde goynge, bothe up and doune,
Men, hors, houndes, and other thynge,
And alle men speke of huntynge,
How they wolde slee the hert with strengthe,
And how the hert had upon lengthe
So much enbosed,[2] I not now what.
Anoon ryght whanne I herde that,
How that they wolde on huntynge goon,
I was ryght glad; and up anoon
Tooke my hors, and forthe I went
Oute of my chaumbre; I never stent,

Mediolan. Otho. This was by no means peculiar to Italy, as the following description of Westminster Abbey, quoted by Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poet.* sec. xxviii., from the *Itinerary* of Symeon, a friar minor, will show:—'Eidem Monasterio quasi immediate conjungitur illud famosissimum palatium regium Anglorum, in quo illa vulgata camera, in cujus *parietibus* sunt omnes historiæ bellicæ totius Bibliæ ineffabiliter *depicta*, atque in *Gallico* completissime et perfectissime constanter *conscriptæ*,' &c. In the dwellings of mediæval times the eye had always some original work of art, or some piece of poetry, or passage from Scripture, to rest upon—in our modern houses it meets with nothing but the eternal stucco egg-moulding of the caricaturist of classical art.

[1] *Hunte* is the old form of *hunter*, from the Anglo-Saxon *hunta*. The tendency of the English language was to change all the Anglo-Saxon terminations into *e*, and then to drop them altogether; but in this case an *r* has, on the contrary, been added.

[2] *Enbosed* is a technical term applied to a deer when so hard pressed as to foam at the mouth, and hang out the tongue.

Til I come to the felde withoute;
Ther overtoke I a grete route
Of huntes and eke of forresterys,
And many relayes and lymerys;
And hyed hem to the forest faste,
And I with hem. So atte last
I axed oón[1] ladde a lymere,
'Say, felowe!' whoo shal hunte here?'
Quod I; and he answered ageyn,
'Sir, themperour Octavyen,"[2]
Quod he, 'and ys here faste by.'
'A goddys halfe, in goode tyme!' quod I;
'Go we faste!' And gan to ryde.
Whanne we come to the forest syde,
Every man didde ryght anoon,
As to huntyng fille to doon.
The mayster hunte, anoon, fote hote,[3]
With a grete horne blewe thre mote,
At the uncoupylynge of hys houndys.
Withynne a while the herte founde ys,
Yhallowed,[4] and rechased faste
Longe time; and so atte laste
This hart rused,[5] and staale away
Fro alle the houndes a prevy way.
The houndes hadde overshotte hym alle,
And were upon a defaulte yfalle.
Therwyth the hunte, wondre faste,
Blewe a forleygne[6] atte laste.

---

[1] 'I asked one *who* led a lymere,' a particular sort of dog.

[2] This is probably the fabulous Emperor Octavian, whose life forms the subject of several mediæval romances. One of these was published by Wynkyn de Worde, with wood-cuts.

[3] See vol. ii. p. 21, note 1.

[4] *Yhallowed*, means sighted, and hallooed; as we say the fox was tally-hoed. Though this stag was *hallooed* and *rechased*, or headed back, he yet contrived to steal away, and the dogs overshot the scent, and lost him.

[5] The printed editions read *rouzed;* but the hart must have rouzed from his lair before he was hallooed and rechased. *Rused* means 'made use of a *ruse* or stratagem.'

[6] The *Forleygne* was a point of the chase, signifying that the game was lost, forlorn, or *verloren*.

I was go walked fro my tree,[1]
And as I went, there came by mee
A whelpe, that fawned me as I stoode,
That hadde yfolowed, and koude no goode.
Hyt come and crepte to me as lowe,
Ryght as hyt hadde me yknowe;
Hylde downe hys hede, and joyned hys erys,
And leyde al smoothe downe hys herys.
I wolde han kaughte hyt; and anoon
Hyt fledde, and was fro me goon.
And I hym folwed, and hyt forthe went
Downe by a floury grene went
Ful thikke of gras, ful softe and swete,
With flourys fele, faire under fete,
And litel used, hyt semed thus;[2]
For both Flora, and Zephirus,
They two, that make floures growe,
Had made her dwellynge ther I trowe.
For hit was on to beholde,
As though therthe envye wolde
To be gayer than the heven;
To have moo floures swiche seven,
As in the welkene sterris be.
Hyt had forgete the poverte
That wynter, thorugh hys colde morwes
Had made hyt suffre; and his sorwes
Alle was foryeten, and that was sene;
For al the wood was waxen grene;
Swetenesse of dewe had made hyt waxe.
Hyt ys no nede eke for to axe
Wher ther were many grene greves,
Or thikke of trees, so ful of leves;
And every tree stoode by hymselve
Fro other, wele tenne fete or twelve.

---

[1] Chaucer had been stationed at a particular tree, as his *tryst*, or watching place, from whence he might see the deer if he should break cover in that direction.

[2] This resembles the description of the path in *The Flower and the Leaf*.—See vol. iv. p. 238.

So grete trees, so huge of strengthe,
Of fourty, fifty fedme lengthe,
Clene, withoute bowgh or stikke,
With croppes brode, and eke as thikke,
They were not an ynche asonder,
That hit was shadewe over al under.
And many an herte and many an hynde
Was both before me and behynde.
Of fawnes, sowres, bukkes, does,
Was ful the woode, and many roes,
And many sqwireles, that sete
Ful high upon the trees and ete,
And in hir maner made festys.
Shortly, hyt was so ful of bestys,
That though Argus, the noble counter[1]
Sete to reken in hys counter,
And rekene with his figuris tenne,
For by tho figures mowe alle kenne,
Yf they be crafty, rekene and nombre,
And telle of every thinge the noumbre,
Yet shulde he fayle to rekene even
The wondres me mette in my swevene.
But forthe they romed ryght wondre faste
Downe the woode; so atte laste
I was war of a man in blak,[2]
That sate, and had yturned his bak

---

[1] This Argus is otherwise called Algus, or Algous, and is said to have been the inventor of the *abacus*, here called *hys counter*. *His figuris tenne* are the Arabic numerals, supposed by Sir David Brewster (*Edin. Encyc.*, Art. Arithmetic) to have been introduced into Europe in the eighth century by the Arabs. Mr. Wright, however, in an article on this subject in the Journal of the Arch. Assoc., has shown very clearly that they are only an improvement on the signs of the abacus. It must have been a matter of extreme difficulty to perform complicated arithmetical operations with the old Roman numerals. The celebrated Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II., exerted himself to procure the general acceptance of the improved numerical figures; but the earliest example of their use in England dates no earlier than the year 1445.

[2] John of Gaunt, in mourning for his Duchess, Blanche.

To an ooke, an huge tree.
'Lorde!' thought I, 'who may that be!
What ayleth hym to sitten here?'
Anoone ryghte I wente nere.
Than founde I sitte, evene upryghte,
A wondre welfarynge knyghte,
(By the maner me thoughte soo)
Of goode mochel, and ryght yonge therto,
Of the age of foure and twenty yere,[1]
Upon hys berde but lytel here,
And he was clothed al in blake.
I stalked[2] even unto hys bake,
And ther I stoode as stille as oughte.
The sothe to saye, he saugh me nought;
For why? he henge hys hede adowne,
And with a dedely sorweful sowne,
He made of ryme tenne vers or twelve,
Of a compleynte to hymselve,
The moste pitee, the moste routhe
That ever I herde; for by my trouthe
Hit was gret wondre that Nature
Myghte suffre any creature
To have suche sorwe, and he not dede.
Ful petuose pale, and nothynge rede,
He sayede a lay, a maner songe,
Withoute noote, withoute songe;
And was thys, for ful wel I kan
Reherse hyt; ryght thus hyt began:—
'I have of sorwe so grete wone,
That joye get I never none,
Now that I see my lady bryghte,
Which I have loved with al my myghte,

[1] John of Gaunt was born in 1340. At the age of nineteen he married his cousin, Blanche of Lancaster, who died in 1369: and he must, therefore, have been twenty-*nine* at the time of her death. *Foure* is probably a misprint.

[2] To *stalk* is to approach stealthily and slowly, generally applied to stealing in upon game so as to obtain a shot at them.

Is fro me dede, and ys agoon.
Allas! Dethe, what ayleth thee,
That thou noldest have taken me
Whan that thou tooke my lady swete?
That was so faire, so fresche, so fre,
So goode, that men may wel se,
Of al goodnesse sche had no mete.[1]
Whanne he had made thus his compleynte,
His sorweful herte gan faste feynte,
And his spiritis wexen dede;
The bloode was fled for pure drede
Down to hys herte, to make hym warme,
For wel hyt feled the herte had harme;
To wete eke why hyt was adrad
By kynde, and for to make hyt glad;
For hyt ys membre principal
Of the body; and that made al
Hys hewe chaunge, and wexe grene
And pale, for ther noo bloode ys sene
In no maner lymme of hys.
Anoon therwith, whanne I saugh this,
He ferde thus evel there he sete,
I went and stoode ryght at his fete,
And grette hym; but he spake noughte,
But argued with his owne thoughte,
And in hys wytte disputed faste,
Why, and how hys lyfe myghte laste;
Hym thoughte hys sorwes were so smerte,
And laye so colde upon hys herte.
So thorugh hys sorwes and hevy thoughte,
Made hym that he herde me noughte,
For he had welnygh loste hys mynde,
Though Pan, that men clepe the god of kynde,

[1] In the printed editions a line is here interpolated, and the last line of the stanza is placed next that ending with the word *swete*, by which means the metre is assimilated to that of the rest of the poem; but the sense is entirely sacrificed.

Were for hys sorwes never so wrothe.
But atte last, to sayne ryghte-sothe,
He was war of me, how I stoode
Before hym, and did of myn hoode,
And had ygret hym, as I best koude.
Debonayrly, and nothyng lowde,
He sayde, 'I preye the be not wrothe,
I herde the not, to seyne the sothe,
Ne I saugh the not, syr, trewely.'
'A, gode sir, no fors!' quod I;
'I am ryghte sory, yif I have oughte
Distroubled yow out of your thoughte;
Foryive me, yif I have mystake.'
'Yis, thamendys[1] is lighte to make,'
Quod he, 'for ther lyeth noon therto;
Ther ys nothynge mis-sayde, nor do.'
Loo! how goodely spak thys knyghte,
As hit hadde be another wyghte;
And made hyt nouther tough ne queynte.
And I saugh that, and gan me aqueynte
With hym, and fonde hym so tretable,
Ryght wonder skylful and resonable,
As me thoughte, for al hys bale;
Anoon ryght I gan fynde a tale
To hym, to loke wher I myght oughte
Have more knowynge of hys thoughte.
'Sir,' quod I, 'this game is doon;
I holde that this hert be goon;
These huntys konne hym no wher see.'
'I do no fors therof,' quod he;
'My thought ys theron never adele.'
'Be oure lorde!' quod I, 'I trow yow wele;
Ryght so me thenketh by youre chere.
But, sir, oo thynge wol ye here?—
Me thynketh in grete sorwe I yow see;
But certys, sir, yif that yee

[1] *Lighte* here means easy.

Wolde oughte discovre me youre woo,
I wolde, as wys God helpe me soo!
Amende hyt, yif I kan or may.
Ye mowe preve hyt be assay;
For, by my trouthe, to make yow hool,
I wol do alle my power hool.
And telleth me of your sorwes smerte;
Paraunter hyt may ese your herte,
That semeth ful seke under your syde.'
With that he loked on me asyde,
As who sayth, 'Nay, that wol not be.'
'Graunt mercy! goode frende,' quod he,
'I thanke the, that thow woldest soo;
But hyt may never the rather be doo.
No man may my sorwe glade,
That maketh my hewe to falle and fade;
And hath myn understondynge lorne,
That me ys woo that I was borne.
May nought make my sorwes slyde,
Nought alle the remedyes of Ovyde,[1]
Ne Orpheus,[2] god of melodye,
Ne Dedalus,[3] with his playes slye;
Ne hele me may noo phisicien,
Nought Ypocras, ne Galyen;[4]
Me ys woo that I lyve houres twelve.
But whoo so wol assaye hymselve,
Whether his herte kan have pitee
Of any sorwe, lat him see me.
I, wrech, that dethe hath made al naked
Of al the blysse that ever was maked,
Yworthe, werste of alle wyghtys,
That hate my dayes and my nightys;
My lyfe, my lustes, be me loothe
For al wel fare, and I be wroothe.

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[1] The allusion is to Ovid's poem entitled *Remedium Amoris*.
[2] See vol. v. p. 206, note 4.
[3] For the story of Dædalus, see Ovid, *Met.* viii.
[4] Hippocrates and Galen.—See vol. i. p. 95, note 3; and vol. iii. p. 67.

The pure dethe ys so ful my foo,
That I wolde deye, hyt wolde not soo;
For whanne I folwe hyt, hit wol flee;
I wolde have hym, hyt nyl not me.
This is my peyne wythoute rede,
Alwey deying, and be not dede.
That Thesiphus[1] that lyeth in helle,
May not of more sorwe telle.
And who so wiste alle, be my trouthe,
My sorwe, but he hadde routhe
And pitee of my sorwes smerte,
That man hath a fendely herte.
For whoso seeth me firste on morwe,
May seyne he hath mette with sorwe;
For I am sorwe, and sorwe ys I,
Allas! and I wol telle thee why;
My joye is tourned to pleynynge,
And al my laughter to wepynge;
My glade thoughtys to hevynesse,
In travayle ys myn ydelnesse,
And eke my reste; my wele is woo,
My goode ys harme, and evermoo
In wrathe ys turned my pleyinge,
And my delyte into sorwynge;
Myn hele ys turned into sekenesse,
In drede ys al my sykernesse;
To derke ys turned al my lyghte,
My wytte ys foly, my daye ys nyghte.
My love ys hate, my slepe wakyinge,
My merthe and meles ys fastynge;
My countenaunce ys nycete,
And all abawed, where so I be;
My pees is pledynge, and in werre.
Allas, how myghte I fare werre?
My boldenesse ys turned to schame,
For fals Fortune hath pleyde a game

[1] *Thesiphus* appears to have been erroneously written for Sisyphus.—See vol. v. p. 45. In this place the printed copies read Tesiphus.

At chesse with me, allas, the while!
The trayteresse fals and ful of gyle,
That al behoteth, and nothyng halt,[1]
She gothe upryghte, and yet she halt,[2]
That baggeth foule, and loketh faire,
The dispitouse debonaire,
That skorneth many a creature.
An ydole of fals purtrayture
Ys she, for she wol soone varyen.
She is the monstres hede ywryen,
As fylthe, over ystrawed with flourys.
Hire moste worschippe and hir flourys
To lyen, for that ys hyr nature.
Withoute feythe, lawe, or mesure,
She ys fals; and ever laughynge
With one yghe, and that other wepynge.
That ys broughte up, she sette[3] al downe;
I lykne hyr to the scorpioune,
That ys a fals flatterynge beste;
For with his hede he maketh feste,
But al amydde hys flaterynge,
With hys tayle hyt wol stynge,
And envenyme, and so wol she.
She ys thenviouse Charite,
That ys ay fals, and semeth wele,
So turneth she hyr fals whele
Aboute, for hyt ys nothynge stable,
Now by the fire, now at table.
For many oon hath she thus yblente,
She is pleye of enchauntemente,
That semeth oon, and ys not soo.
The fals thefe! what hath she doo,
Trowest thou? by oure Lorde, I wol the seye:—
At chesse with me she gan to pleye;

---

[1] *Halt* is the contracted form of *holdeth*.—See vol. v. p. 83, note 2.
[2] The second *halt* is the contracted form of *halteth*, limpeth.
[3] *Set* is the contracted form of *sitteth*.

With hir fals draughtes dyvers
She staale on me, and toke my fers;[1]
And whanne I saugh my fers awaye,
Allas! I kouthe no lenger playe;
But seyde, farewel, swete! ywys,
And farewel, al that ever ther ys!
Therwith Fortune seyde, 'chek here!'
And 'mate' in the myd poynt of the chekkere,
With a poune errante, allas!
Ful craftier to pleye she was
Than Athalus,[2] that made the game
First of the chesse, so was hys name.
But God wolde I had oones or twyes,
Ykonde, and knowe the jeupardyes,
That koude the Greke Pythagoras,[3]
I shulde han pleyde the bet at ches,
And kept my fers the bet therby.
And though wherto? for trewely
I holde that wysshe not worthe a stree;[4]
Hyt had be never the bet for me.
For Fortune kan so many a wyle,
Ther be but fewe kan hir begile,

---

[1] Tyrwhitt says the *fers* is 'the piece in chess next to the king, which we and other European nations call the queen, though very improperly, as Hyde has observed. Pherz, or Pherzân, which is the Persian name for the same piece, signifies the king's *chief counsellor*, or *general*.—*Hist. Shahilud.*, page 88-9.' Here the propriety of the metaphor lies in the Pherz being the queen, the loss of which piece in the game of chess, John of Gaunt compares to the loss of his Duchess Blanche.

[2] That Athalus Asiaticus was the first inventor of the chesse, Joannes Sarisberiensis, in his *Policraticon*, lib. i. c. 5, doth witnesse, from whence, no doubt, Chaucer had it, as he had many things else, being a work full of variety and skill, and therefore justly commended by J. Lipsius. There it may appear that Athalus invented the game of *Abacus*, the which word, as it hath divers significations, so is it taken for *latrunculorum ludus*, that is, the chesse play, as out of Macrobius and others may be proved.—S.

[3] An allusion to the dilemma of Pythagoras, which he represented by the Greek Y.

[4] That is, 'Yet what would be the use of it? I hold this wish not worth a straw.'

And eke she ys the lasse to blame.
My selfe, I wolde have do the same,
Before God, had I be as she;
She ought the more excused be.
For this I saye yet more therto,—
Hadde I be God, and myghte have do
My wille, whanne she my fers kaughte,
I wolde have drawe the same draughte:[1]
For, al so wys God yive me reste!
I dar wel swere, she tooke the beste.
But thorugh that draughte I have lorne
My blysse; allas, that I was borne!
For evermore I trowe, trewely,
For al my wille, my lust holly
Ys turned; but yet what to doone?[2]
By oure Lorde, hyt is to deye soone;
For nothynge I leve it noughte,
But lyve and deye ryght in this thoughte.[3]
For there nys planete in firmament,
Ne in ayre ne in erthe noon element,
That they ne yive me a yift, echone,
Of wepynge, whanne I am allone.[4]
For whanne that I avise me wel,
And bethenke me everydel,
How that ther lyeth in rekenynge
Inne my sorwe for nothynge;[5]
And how ther lyveth no gladnesse
May glade me of my distresse;
And how I have loste suffisaunce
And therto I have no plesaunce:

---

[1] That is, 'I would have endeavoured to take her *fers*.'

[2] The meaning is, 'But yet what is to be done? By our Lord, the only thing that can be done is to die soon.'

[3] That is, 'For I have no other faith [*leve* is put for *beleve*] but to live and die in this conviction.'

[4] Alluding to the supposed influence of the planets and the elements, he says the only gift they confer upon him is that of weeping.

[5] This sentence is obscure. It may mean, perhaps, 'How impossible it is to count my sorrows, they are so numerous.'

Than may I saye, I have ryght noughte.
And whanne al this falleth in my thoughte,
Allas! than am I overcome,
For that ys doon is not to come.
I have more sorow than Tantale.'[1]
And whanne I herde hym telle thys tale
Thus pitously, as I yow telle,
Unnethe myghte I lenger dwelle:
Hyt dyd myn herte so moche woo.
'A, goode sir!' quod I, 'say not so!
Have some pitee on your nature,
That formed you to creature.
Remembreth yow of Socrates;
For he counted not thre strees
Of noughte that Fortune koude doo.
'No,' quod he, 'I kan not soo.'
'Why so, goode syr? yis parde!' quod I;
Ne seye nought soo; for trewely,
Though ye had loste the ferses[2] twelve,
And ye for sorwe mordred your selve,
Ye sholde be dampned in this cas,
By as goode ryghte as Medea was,
That slough hir children for Jason;[3]
And Phyllis also for Demophon
Henge hir selfe, so weylaweye!
For he had broke his terme deye
To come to hir.[4] Another rage
Had Dydo, the quene eke of Cartage,

---

[1] Tantalus, king of Lydia, punished in hell with hunger and thirst in the midst of plenty:—

Tantalus a labris sitiens fugientia captat
Flumina.—Hor.—*Sat.* i. i. 67.

[2] By the *ferses* appear to be meant all the pieces except the pawns.

[3] For the story of Medea, see Ovid, *Met.* vii., whence Chaucer probably obtained it. There was a French translation in his time; but it is hardly credible that he should not have seen the original.

[4] The letter of Phyllis to Demophoön is the second of Ovid's *Heroides*.

That slough hir selfe, for Eneas
Was fals;[1] which a foole she was!
And Ecquo died, for Narcissus
Nolde nat love hir; and ryght thus
Hath many another foly doon.
And for Dalida dyed Sampson,
That slough hymselfe with a pilere.[2]
But ther is no man alyve here
Wolde for o fers make this woo.'
'Why so? quod he; 'hyt ys not soo;
Thou woste ful lytel what thou menyst,
I have loste more than thow wenyst.'
'How may that be?' quod I.
'Goode sir, telle me al hooly,
In what wyse, how, why and wherfore,
That ye have thus youre blysse lore?'
'Blythely!' quod he; 'come, sytte adoun!
I telle hyt the upon a condicioun,
That thou shalt hooly with al thy wytte
Do thyn entente to herken hitte.'
'Ye, syr'—'Swere thy trouthe therto—
'Gladly—Do thanne holde hereto.'[3]
'I shal ryght blythely, so God me save,
Hooly with al the witte I have,
Here yow as wel as I kan.'
'A goddys halfe![4] quod he, and began:—
'Syr,' quod he, 'sith ferste I kouthe
Have any maner wytte fro youthe,
Or kyndely understondynge,
To comprehende in any thynge
What love was, in myn owne wytte,
Dredeles, I have ever yitte

---

[1] See Ovid, *Met.* iii. [2] Judges xvi. 29.

[3] Urry reads 'Gladly to holdin the hereto.' But the passage is sufficiently intelligible when broken into a dialogue, as in the text. In matters of punctuation the MS. affords no help.

[4] On God's behalf, or in the name of God, was an expression commonly used before taking anything in hand.

Be tributarye, and yive rente
To Love hooly, with goode entente,
And thorugh plesaunce become his thralle,
With goode wille, body, herte, and alle.
Al this I putte in his servage,
As to my lorde, and did homage;
And ful devoutely I prayed hym tho,
He shulde besette myn herte so,
That hyt plesaunce to hym were,
And worshippe to my lady dere.
'And this was longe, and many a yere
(Or that myn herte was set owhere)
That I did thus, and nyste why;
I trowe hit come me kyndely.
Paraunter I was therto moste able,
As a white walle, or a table;[1]
For hit ys redy to cache, and take
Al that men wille therynne make.
Whether so men wille portreye or peynte,
Be the werkes never so queynte.
'And thilke tyme I ferde ryght so,
I was able to have lerned tho,
And to have kende as wel, or better
Paraunter, other arte or lettre;
But for love come firste in my thoughte,
Therfore I forgate hyt naughte.
I ches love to my firste crafte,
Therfore hit ys with me lafte;
For why? I toke hyt of so yonge age,
That malyce hadde my corage
Not that tyme turned to nothynge,
Thorugh to mochel knowlachynge.
For that tyme Youthe, my maistresse,
Governed me in ydelnesse;

[1] His mind, he says, like a *tabyla rasa*, was ready to receive any impression.

For hyt was in my firste youthe,[1]
And tho ful lytel goode I couthe,
For alle my werkes were flyttynge,
That tyme, and al my thoughte varyinge.
Alle were to me ylyche goode
That knew I thoo, but thus hit stode.
'Hit happed that I come on a deye
Into a place, ther that I seye
Trewely the fayrest companye
Of ladyes, that evere man with ye
Hadde sene togedres in oo place.
Shal I clepe hyt happe, other grace,
That broughte me there? nay, but Fortune,
That ys to lyen ful commune;
The fals trayteresse perverse!
God wolde I koude clepe hir werse;
For now she worcheth me ful woo,
And I wol telle sone why soo.
'Amonge thise ladyes thus echone,
Sothe to seyne, I saugh oone
That was lyke noon of the route;
For I dar swere, withoute doute,
That as the sommerys sunne bryghte
Is fayrer, clerer, and hath more lyghte
Than any other planete in hevene,
The moone, or the sterres seven;
For al the worlde, so hadde she
Surmountede hem alle of beaute,
Of manere, and of comelynesse,
Of stature, and of so wel sette gladnesse;
Of godleyhede, and so wel beseye;
Shortely what shal I seye?
By God, and by his halwes twelve,[2]
Hyt was my swete, ryghte al hir selve.

---

[1] John of Gaunt was married to his first Duchess, Blanche, at the age of nineteen.—See *ante*, p. 151, note 1.

[2] 'God and his halwes twelve,' means 'Our Lord and his twelve Apostles.'

She hadde so stedfaste countenaunce,
So noble porte, and meyntenaunce.
And Love, that hadde wel herde my boone,[1]
Had espyed me thus soone,
That she ful sone, in my thoughte,
As helpe me God, so was I kaughte
So sodeynly, that I ne toke
No manere counseyl, but at hir loke,
And at myn herte; for why? hir eyen
So gladly, I trowe, myn herte seyen,
That purely tho myn owne thoughte
Seyde, hit were bette serve hir for noughte,
Than with another to be wel.
And hyt was sothe, for every dele,
I wil anoon ryghte telle the why.
'I sawgh hir daunce so comelely,
Carole and synge so swetely,
Laughe, and pleye so womanly,
And loke so debonairly;
So goodely speke and so frendly;
That certes I trowe that evermore,
Nas seyne so blysful a tresore.
For every heer on hir hede,
Sothe to seyne, hyt nas not rede,
Ne nouther yelowe, ne browne hyt nas;
Me thoughte most lyke golde hyt was.
And whiche[2] eyen my lady hadde!
Debonaire, goode, glade, and sadde,
Symple, of goode mochel, nought to wide.
Therto hir looke nas not asyde,
Ne overtwert, but besette to wele,
It drewe and tooke up everydele
Alle that on hir gonne beholde,
Hir eyen semede anoon she wolde

1 Love, who had well heard his prayers.—See *ante*, p. 161.

2 *Which* here means *what*, as in *The Knightes Tale*.—See vol. i. p. 175, note 1. It occurs again in the next page, 'But which a visage had she thertoo.'

Have mercy, (foolys wenden soo)
But hyt was never the rather doo;
Hyt nas no counterfeted thynge,
Hyt was hir owne pure lokynge,
That the goddesse, dame Nature,
Hadde made hem opene by mesure,
And cloos; for were she never so glad,
Hir lokynge was not foly sprad,
Ne wildely, though that she pleyde;
But ever, me thought, hir eyen seyde,
'Be God, my wrathe ys al foryive!'
Therwith hir lyste so wel to lyve,
That dulnesse was of hir adrad.
She nas to sobre, ne to glad;
In alle thynges more mesure,
Had never, I trowe, creature.[1]
But many oon with hir loke she hurte,
And that sate hyr ful lytel at herte;
For she knewe nothynge of her thoughte.
But whether she knewe, or knewe it nought,
Algate she ne roughte of hem a stree.
To gete hir love noo nerre nas he
That woned at hom, than he in Ynde;
The formest was alweye behynde.
But goode folke over alle other,
She lovede as man may do hys brother;
Of whiche love she was wounder large,
In skilful placis that bere charge.
But which a visage had she thertoo!
Allas! myn herte is wonder woo,
That I ne kan discryven hyt.
Me lakketh bothe Englyssh and wit,
For to undo hyt, at the fulle;
And eke my spiritis be to dulle,

[1] Tyrwhitt observes, 'Upon comparing the portrait of a beautiful woman which M. de la Ravaliere (*Poesies du Roi de Navarre.* Gloss. *v.* Belce) has cited from MS. du Roi, No. 7612, with Chaucer's description of his heroine, I find that several lines in the latter are literally translated from the former.'

So grete a thynge for to devyse;
I have no witte that kan suffise
To comprehende hir beute;
But thus moche dar I seyne, that she
Was white, rody, fresshe, and lyvely hewed,
And every day hir beaute newed,
And negh hir face was alderbest;
For, certys, Nature had swiche lest,
To make that faire, that trewely she
Was hir chefe patrone of beaute,
And chefe ensample of al hir werke,
And monstre;[1] for be hyt never so derke,
Me thynkyth I se hir ever mo.
And yet, more over, though alle thoo
That ever livede were now alyve,
Ne sholde han fonde to discryve
In al hir face a wikked sygne,
For hit was sad, symple, and benygne.
'And wiche a goodely, softe speche,
Hadde that swete, my lyves leche!
So frendely, and so wel ygrounded,
Upon al resoun so wel yfounded,
And so tretable to alle goode,
That I dar swere wel by the roode,
Of eloquence was never founde
So swete a sounynge facounde;
Ne trewer tonged, ne skorned lasse,
Ne bet koude hele, that by the masse,
I durste swere, though the pope hit songe,
That ther was never yet thorugh hir tonge,
Man ne woman gretely harmid;[2]
As for hit, was al harme hyd.
Ne lasse flatterynge in hir worde,
That purely, hir symple recorde,

[1] *Monster* is primarily anything which is shown, from *monstrare* or *montrer*, and in this sense is sometimes applied to a review of troops. Here it means a *sample*.

[2] That is, 'As far as she was concerned, all harm was concealed.' She did not take pleasure in publishing scandals.

Was founde as trewe as any bonde,
Or trouthe of any mannys honde.
Ne chyde she koude never a dele,
That knoweth al the worlde ful wele.
'But swich a fairenesse of a nekke
Hadde that swete, that boon nor brekke
Nas ther noon seen that mys-satte;
Hyt was white, smothe, streght, and pure flatte,
Withouten hole or canel boon;[1]
As be semynge, had she noon.
'Hir throte, as I have now memoyre,
Semed as a rounde toure of yvoyre,
Of goode gretenesse, and nought to grete,
And faire White[2] goode she hete,
That was my lady name ryghte.
She was bothe faire and bryghte,
She had not hir name wronge.
Ryghte faire shuldres, and body longe
She had; and armes every lythe,
Fattyssh, flesshy, nat grete therwith;
Ryghte white handes, and nayles rede,
Rounde brestes; and of goode brede
Hir lippes were; a streighte flatte bakke;
I knewe on hir noon other lakke,
That alle hir lymmes nere pure sywynge,[3]
In as ferre as I had knowynge.
Therto she koude so wel pleye
Whan that hir lyste, that I dar seye,
That she was lyke to torche bryghte,
That every man may take of lyghte

---

[1] The canel-bone, also called the rigge-bone, is the collar-bone: so called because there is a channel or ridge, or depression of the skin, just above it.

[2] Instead of *goode*, Urry reads *ywis*. The Knight says her name was *White*, that is, Blanche, thus leaving no doubt as to the purport of the poem.

[3] That is, 'I knew of nothing that was wanting in her, for all her limbs followed, or corresponded with, the rest of her perfections.'

Ynough, and ȝyt hathe never the lesse.
Of maner and of comlynesse,
Ryghte so ferde my lady dere.
For every wighte, of hir manere
Myghte cacche ynough, yif that he wolde,
Yif he hadde eyen hir to beholde.
For I dar swere wel, yif that she
Hadde amonge ten thousande be,
She wolde have be, atte leste,
A chefe meroure of al the feste,
Though they had stonde in a rowe,
To mennys eyen, that koude have knowe.
For wher so men hadde pleyde or wakyd,
Me thought the felyschyppe as naked
Withouten hir, that saugh I oones,
As a corowne withoute stones.
Trewely she was to myn eye,
The soleyne fenix of Arabye;
For ther liveth nevir but oon,
Ne swiche as she, ne know I noon.
To speke of godenesse, trewely she
Had as moche debonairete,
As ever had Hester[1] in the Bible,
And more, yif more were possyble.
And sothe to seyne, therwythalle
She hadde a wytte so generalle,
So hoole enclyned to alle goode,
That al hir wytte was sette, by the rode,
Withoute malyce, upon gladnesse.
And therto I saugh never yet a lesse
Harmeful than she was in doynge,
I seye not that she ne hadde knowynge
What harme was, or elles she
Hadde koude no good, so thenketh me.
And trewly, for to speke of trouthe,
But she hadde hädde, hyt hadde be routhe.

[1] Hester has been cited as an example of meekness in *The Marchaundes Tale*.—See vol. ii. p. 178.

Therof she hadde so mocle hir dele,[1]
And I dar seyne, and swere hyt wele,
That Trouthe hymselfe, over alle and alle,
Hadde chose hys maner[2] principalle
In hir, that was his restynge place.
Therto she hadde the moste grace,
To have stedefaste perseveraunce,
And esy attempry governaunce,
That ever I knewe, or wyste yitte,
So pure suffraunt was hir wytte.
And resoun gladly she understoode,
Hyt folowed wel, she koude goode.
She used gladly to do wel;
These were hir maneres every del.
'Therwith she loved so wel ryghte,
She wronge do wolde to no wyghte;
No wyghte myghte doo hir noo shame,
She loved so wel hir owne name.
'Hyr lust to holde no wyghte in honde,
Ne, be thou siker, she wolde not fonde,
To holde no wyghte in balaunce,
By halfe word, ne by countenaunce,
But yif men wolde upon hir lye.
Ne sende men into Walakye,
To Pruise, and to Tartarye,
To Alysaundre, ne into Turkye,
And bydde him faste anoon that he
Goo hoodeles into the drye se,
And come home by the Carrenare;[3]
And seye 'Sir, be now ryghte ware,
That I may of yow here seyne,
Worshyppe, or that ye come ageyne.'[4]

---

[1] That is, 'Thereof she had so large a portion to her share.'

[2] *Maner* here means manor, or mansion.

[3] None of the commentators have been able to explain this word, nor is it easy to determine the meaning of the *drie se* in the preceding line.

[4] The Duke says she did not follow the example of some ladies of

'She ne used no suche knakkes smale,
But wherfor that I telle my tale;—[1]
Ryghte on thys same, as I have seyde,
Was hooly al my love leyde;
For, certes, she was that swete wife,
My suffisaunce, my luste, my lyfe,
Myn happe, myn hele, and al my blysse,
My worldys welfare, and my goddesse,
And I hooly hires, and every del.'
'By oure Lorde!' quod I, 'I trowe you wel!
Hardely, your love was wel besette;
I not how ye myghte have doo bette.'
'Bette? ne no wyghte so wele,' quod he.
'I trowe hyt wel, sir,' quod I, 'parde!'
'Nay, leve hyt wel:'—'Sire, so do I;
I leve yow wel, that trewely
Yow thoughte that she was the best,
And to beholde, the alderfayrest,
Who soo hadde loked hir with your eyen.'
'With myne? nay, alle that hir seyen,
Seyde and swore hyt was soo.
And though they ne hadde, I wolde tho
Have loved best my lady free,
Though I hadde hadde al the beaute
That ever hadde Alcibiades;[2]
And al the strengthe of Ercules;
And therto hadde the worthynesse
Of Alysaunder; and al the richesse
That ever was in Babyloyne,
In Cartage, or in Macedoyne,

---

the day, who put their knights' devotion to the test by sending them on a fool's errand to foreign countries, and, by way of compensation, saying, 'Sir, be sure I shall speak well of you in your absence.'

[1] That is, 'But to return to my object in telling *you* this story.'

[2] This is written in the MS. *Alcipiades*; but Alcibiades is evidently the person intended. The variation in the manner of spelling proper names is so great, that they can scarcely ever be depended upon.

Or in Rome, or in Nyny[illegible];
And therto also as hardy be,
As was Ector, so have I joye,
That Achilles slough at Troye;
(And therfore was he slayne alsoo
In a temple; for bothe twoo
Were sleyne, he and Antylegyus;
And so seyth Dares Frygius,[1]
For love of Polixena)
Or ben as wise as Mynerva;
I wolde ever, withoute drede
Have loved hir, for I moste nede.

'Nede? Nay trewely I gabbe nowe!
Nought nede; and I wol telle howe.
For of goode wille myn herte hyt wolde,
And eke to love hir I was holde,
As for the faireste and the beste.
She was as goode, so have I reste,
As ever was Penolopee of Grece,
Or as the noble wife Lucrece,
That was the beste, (he telleth thus
The Romayne Tytus Lyvyus,)
She was as gode, and nothynge lyke,
Though hir stories be autentyke;
Algate she was as trewe as she.

'But wherfore that I telle the,
Whanne I firste my lady seye?
I was right yong, sothe to seye,
And ful grete nede I hadde to lerne,
Whanne myn herte wolde yerne.
To love hyt was a grete empryse,
But as my wytte koude beste suffise,
After my yonge childely wytte,
Withoute drede, I besette hytte,
To love hir in my beste wyse,
To do hir worshippe, and the servise

[1] See vol. v. p. 22, note 3.

That I koude thoo, be my trouthe
Withoute feynynge, outher slouthe.
For wonder feyne I wolde hir se.
So mochel hyt amended me,
That whanne I saugh hir first amorwe,
I was warished of al my sorwe
Of al day after; til hyt were eve
Me thoughte nothynge myghte me greve,
Were my sorwes never so smerte.
And yet she sytte[1] so in myn herte,
That, by my trouthe, I nolde noughte
For al thys worlde, oute of my thoughte
Leve my lady; noo, trewly!'
'Now by my trouthe, sir,' quod I,
'Me thynketh ye have suche a chaunce,
As shryfte, withoute repentaunce.'[2]
'Repentaunce? nay, fy!' quod he,
'Shulde I now repente me
To love? nay, certis, than were I wel
Wers thanne was Achetofel,[3]
Or Anthenor,[4] so have I joye!
The traytour that betraysed Troye:
Or the fals Genellon,[5]
He that purchased the treson
Of Rowlande, and of Olyvere.
Nay, while I am alyve here,
I nyl foryete hir never moo.'
'Now, goode sir,' quod I thoo,
'Ye han wel tolde me here before,
Hyt ys no nede to reherse more,
How ye saugh hir firste, and where;
But wolde ye telle me the manere,

---

[1] Even still she so sits in my heart, that, &c. *Sytte* is the contracted form for *sitteth*.

[2] That is, 'You are in the case of those who shrive themselves, or confess, and do not repent.'

[3] See 2 Sam. xvii.

[4] See vol. v. p. 187, note 3.

[5] See vol. iii. p. 98, note 2.

To hire which was your firste speche,
Therof I wolde yow beseche;
And how she knewe firste your thoughte,
Whether ye loved hir or noughte;
And telleth me eke what ye have lore,
I herde yow telle here before.
Yee, he seyde, 'thow nost what thou menyst,
I have lost more than thou wenyst.'
'What losse ys that?' quod I thoo,
'Nyl she not love yow? ys hyt soo?
Or have ye oughte doon amys,
That she hathe lefte yow? ys hyt this?
For Goddys love, telle me alle.'
'Before God,' quod he, 'and I shalle.
I seye ryghte as I have seyde,
On hir was al my love leyde,
And yet she nyste hyt not never a del,
Nought longe tyme, leve hyt wel;
For ryghte be siker, I durste noughte,
For al this worlde, telle hir my thoughte;
Ne I wolde have wrathed hir trewly.
For wostow why? she was lady
Of the body; she hadde the herte,
And who hath that may not asterte.[1]
'But for to kepe me fro ydelnesse,
Trewely I did my besynesse
To make songes, as I best koude.
And ofte tyme I songe hem loude,
And made songes, this a grete dele,
Although I koude not make so wele
Songes, ne know the arte al,
As koude Lamekys sone, Tuballe,
That founde out firste the arte of songe.
For as hys brothres hammeres ronge,

[1] That is, 'She was completely mistress of his heart; and whoever has this may not escape.

Upon hys anvelt, up and downe,
Therof he tooke the firste sowne.[1]
But Grekes seyne of Pittagoras,
That he the firste fynder was
Of the arte; Aurora telleth soo;[2]
But therof no fors of hem twoo.
Algatis songes thus I made,
Of my felynge, myn herte to glade:
And, loo! this was alther firste,
I not wher hyt were the werste.
'Lorde! hyt maketh myn herte lyghte,
Whanne I thenke on that swete wyghte,
That is so semely on to se,
And wisshe to Gode hit myghte so be
That she wolde holde me for hir knyghte,
My lady that is so fayre and bryghte.
'Now have I tolde the, sothe to seye,
My firste songe. Upon a day,
I bethoughte me what woo
And sorwe that I suffred thoo
For hir, and yet she wyst hyt noughte,
Ne telle hir, durst I not, my thoughte.
Allas! thoughte I, I kan no rede!
And but I telle hir, I am but dede;

---

[1] See Gen. iv. 21. 'And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.' This is an ingenious way of accounting for musical sounds. Handel's *Harmonious Blacksmith* embodies the same idea.

[2] The title of a Latin metrical version of several parts of the Bible by Petrus de Riga, Canon of Rheims in the twelfth century. Leyser, in his *Hist. Poet. Med. Ævi.*, p. 692-736, has given large extracts from this work, and amongst others, the passage which Chaucer seems to have had in his eye:—

'Aure Jubal varios ferramenti notat ictus.
Pondera librat in his consona quæque facit,
Hoc inventa modo prius est ars musica, quamvis
Pythagoram dicant hanc docuisse prius.'—T.

A curious idea of chronology the man must have had who supposed that Pythagoras taught the *ars musica* before Jubal.

And yif I telle hir, to seye ryghte sothe,
I am adred she wol be wrothe,
Allas! what shal I thanne doo?
In this debate I was so woo,
Me thoughte myn herte braste atweyne.
So, at the laste, sothe to seyne,
I bethoughte me that Nature,
Ne formed never in creature,
So moche beaute trewely
And bounte, wythoute mercy.
'In hope of that, my tale I tolde,
With sorwe, as that I never sholde,
For nedys; and mawgree myn hede
I most have tolde hir, or be dede:
I not wel how that I beganne,
Ful evel reherse hyt I kan;
And eke, as helpe me God withalle,
I trowe hyt was in the dismalle,
That was the tenne woundes of Egipte;[1]
For many a worde I overskipte
In my tale for pure fere,
Lest my wordys mys-sette were.
With sorweful herte, and woundes dede,
Softe, and quakynge for pure drede
And shame, and styntynge in my tale
For ferde, and myn hewe al pale,
Ful ofte I wexe bothe pale and rede;
Bowynge to hir I heng the hede,
I durste not ones loke hir on,
For witte, maner and al was goon.
I seyde: 'Mercy,'[2] and no more;
Hyt nas no game, hyt sate me sore.

[1] The ten plagues of Egypt, here called *woundes*, probably because the Latin *plaga*, whence the word plague, primarily bears this meaning. It would seem that a poem on the ten plagues was set to some well-known dismal air, to which the duke compares his tone when addressing his lady.

[2] This seems to have been the favourite resource of lovers when they had nothing else to say.—See vol. v. p. 119.

'So at the laste, sothe to seyne,
Whanne that myn herte was come ageyne,
To telle shortely al my speche,
With hool herte I gan hir beseche
That she wolde be my lady swete;
And swore, and gan hir hertely hete
Ever to be stedfast and trewe,
And love hir alwey fresshly newe,
And never other lady have,
And al hir worshippe for to save,
As I best koude; I swore hir this,
For youres is alle that ever ther is,
For evermore, myn herte swete!
And never to false yow, but I mete,[1]
I nyl, as wysse God helpe me soo!
'And whanne I hadde my tale ydoo,
God wote she acounted not a stree
Of al my tale, so thoughte me.
To telle shortly ryghte as hyt ys
Trewely hir answere hyt was this;
I kan not now wele counterfete
Hir wordys, but this was the grete[2]
Of hir answere; she seyde, 'Nay!'
Al outerly: allas! that day,
The sorwe I suffered and the woo,
That trewely Cassandra, that soo
Bewayled the destruccioun
Of Troye, and of Ilyon,
Hadde never swich sorwe as I thoo.
I durste no more seye thertoo,
For pure fere, but stale away.
And thus I lyved ful many a deye,
That trewely I hadde no nede,
Ferther than my beddes hede,

[1] That is, 'Unless I dream.' He means never to be intentionally and deliberately false.

[2] The substance.

Never a day to seche sorwe;
I fonde hyt redy every morwe,
For why? I loved hyr in no gere.[1]
'So hit befel another yere,
I thoughte ones I wold fonde,
To do hir knowe, and understonde
My woo; and she wele understode,
That I ne wilned thynge but gode,
And worshippe, and to kepe hir name,
Over alle thynges, and drede hir shame,
And was so besy hir to serve,
And pitee were I shulde sterve,
Syth that I wilned noon harme, ywys.
'So whanne my lady knewe al thys,
My lady yaf me, al hooly,
The noble yifte of hir mercy,
Savynge her worshippe by alle weyes;
Dredeles, I mene noon other weyes.
And therwith she yaf me a rynge;
I trowe hyt was the firste thynge.
But yif myn herte was ywaxe
Gladde, that is no nede to axe.
As helpe me God, I was as blyve
Reysed, as fro dethe to lyve,
Of alle happes the alderbeste,
The gladdest and the moste at reste.
For trewely that swete wyghte,
Whanne I hadde wrong,[2] and she the ryghte,
She wolde alwey so goodely
Foryeve me so debonairely,
In al my yowthe, in al chaunce,
She tooke me in hir governaunce.[3]

[1] *Gere* appears to be a substantive derived from the French *girer* and to mean changeableness. It enters into the composition of the word *gerful*, or *geriful*.

[2] This is the French construction, *Quand j'avais tort*.

[3] That is, 'She took under her governance my extreme youth [John of Gaunt was married at nineteen] in every case or chance which might arise.'

Therwyth she was alway so trewe,
Our joye was ever ylyche newe;
Our hertys werne so evene a payre,
That never nas that oon contrayre
To that other, for noo woo:
For sothe ylyche they suffred thoo
Oo blisse and eke oo[1] sorwe bothe;
Ylyche they were bothe glade and wrothe,
Al was us oon, withoute were.
And thus we lyved ful many a yere,
So wel I kan not telle how.'
'Sir!' quod I, 'where is she now?'
'Now?' quod he, and stynte anoon;
Therewith he waxe as dede as stoon,
And seyde, 'Allas, that I was bore!
That was the losse! and herebefore
I tolde the that I hadde lorne,
Bethenke how I seyde here beforne,
Thow wost ful lytel what thow menyst,
I have loste more than thow wenyst.[2]
God wote, allas! ryghte that was she.'
'Allas! sir, how? what may that be?'
'She ys dede:'[3]—'Nay?'—'Yis, be my trouthe!'
'Is that youre losse? be God, hyt ys routhe!'
And with that worde, ryghte anoon
They gan to strake forth; al was doon,
For that tyme, the herte huntynge.
With that me thoughte that this kynge,
Gan homewarde for to ryde,
Unto a place was ther besyde,
Which was from us but a lyte,
A longe castel with wallys white,

---

[1] *Oo* here means *one*. [2] See *ante*, p. 160.

[3] The Duchess Blanche died in the year 1369, leaving issue one son, Henry (afterwards Henry IV.), and two daughters, Philippa and Elizabeth.—BARNES.—*Hist. of Edw. III.*

By seynt Johan, on a rych hille,[1]
As me mette; but thus hyt fille.
Ryghte thus me mette,[2] as I yow telle,
That in the castel ther was a belle,
As hyt hadde smyte houres twelve;
Therewyth I awooke my selve,
And fonde me lyinge in my bedde;
And the booke that I hadde redde,
Of Alcyone and Seys the kynge,
And of the goddys of slepynge,
I fonde hyt in myn honde ful evene.
Thoughte I, thys ys so queynt a swevene,
That I wol, be processe of tyme,
Fonde to put this swevene in ryme,
As I kan best, and that anoon;
This was my swevene; now hit ys doon!

EXPLICIT THE BOKE OF THE DUCHESSE.

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[1] By this castle on a hill is meant Windsor, and by the Emperor Octavian, Edward III. Perhaps Chaucer, who held the office of clerk of the works, may have intended to compliment him on the taste and magnificence of his buildings, by comparing him to an Emperor who boasted that he had found Rome of brick and left it of marble. 'Ut jure sit gloriatus, marmoream se relinquere quam lateritiam accepisset.' —SUET. *D. Augustus.*

[2] The verb *to mete* seems to mean, not exactly *to dream*, but *to appear in a dream.* Thus *me mette* would be correctly translated into modern English, 'It appeared to me in my dream.' The construction is the same as in the expression *me thinks*, it seems to me.

OF QUENE ANELYDA AND FALSE ARCYTE.

[This short poem is unfinished, as appears from the last stanza, in which the reader is promised a description of the Temple of Mars in Thrace, and of the particulars of Queen Anelyda's vow and sacrifice. The first few verses have so much the air of a weak imitation of the beginning of *The Knightes Tale*, that we should be disposed to doubt the authenticity of the piece, were it not that it is expressly ascribed to Chaucer by Lydgate in the following verses:—

> Of Anelyda and of fals Arcyte
> He made a complcynte, dolful and pitous.

The similarity between this fragment and the opening of *The Knightes Tale* may perhaps be accounted for by supposing that Chaucer at first intended to make the loves of Anelyda and Arcyte the subject of a longer poem; that he afterwards changed his plan in favour of the story of Palamon and Arcite; and that in the latter he ultimately adopted as much of the opening of the former as suited his purpose.

For his authorities he quotes Statius and Corinne. The early stanzas, relating to Theseus, are the only part taken from the *Thebais;* and the poems of Corinna, the cotemporary of Pindar, are now lost.

The metre of the first part is the same as that of the *Troylus and Cryseyde;* but the *Compleynte of Anelyda* is written in a stanza of nine lines, of which the first, second, fourth, fifth, eighth, and ninth, fall into one rhyme, and the third, sixth, and seventh, into another. There are three stanzas which consist of eight lines only, and of which each verse is composed of four, instead of five, iambic feet, or their equivalents. This last deficiency Urry most unwarrantably ekes out with unmeaning expletives of his own.

The MS. from which the present text has been taken is bound up with some of Lydgate's and Occleve's poems, in a volume numbered 372 in the Harleian collection. Though written on paper, and therefore of uncertain date, it is more

correct than any of the printed texts. It supplies some words necessary to the sense, and preserves the grammatical inflections of Chaucer's time, which are essential to the correctness of the metre.]

'THOU ferse God of armes, Marse the rede,
That in thy frosty countre called Trace,[1]
Withinne thi grisely temples ful of drede,
Honoured arte as patron of that place!
With thee, Bellona, Pallas, ful of grace!
Be present, and my song contynue and guye;
At my begynnyng thus to yow I crye.

'For it ful depe is sonken in my mynde,
With pitows herte, in Englissh to endite
This olde story, in Latyn which I fynde,
Of queene Anelyda and fals Arcyte,
That elde, which kan al frete and byte,
(And it hath fretyn many a noble story)
Hath nygh devoured out of oure memory.

'Be favourable eke thou Polymnya[2]
On Pernasoo that hath thy susters glade,
By Elycon, not ferre from Cirrea,[3]
Syngest with voice memorial in the shade,
Under the laurer, which that may not fade,
And doo that I my shippe to haven wynne,
First folowe I Stace,[4] and after hym Corinne.[5]

[1] See vol. i. p. 152, note 1.

[2] Polyhymnia, one of the Muses.—See OVID, *Fasti*, v. 9.

[3] By Cirrea is probably meant Syria; and Chaucer perhaps took it for granted that Helicon was near Syria, because they were both in the East.

[4] Statius.

[5] What author is meant, I cannot say. One can hardly suppose that Chaucer had met with that poem of the ancient Corinna, the contemporary of Pindar, which was entitled Ἔπτα ἐπὶ Θήβαις (*Fragm. ex Apollonia Dyscolo*, ap. MAITTAIR *de Dialect.*, p. 429, l. 4), nor do I know that any fictitious work upon the war of Thebes has ever been set forth under her name. She is mentioned by Propertius (ii. *El.* iii. 21), and by Statius (*Sylv.* v. Carm. iii. 158), but neither of them takes notice of her having written on the affairs of Thebes.—T. Some poet of this name, however, appears to have been known in the middle ages, for she is mentioned by Skelton.

Jamque domos patrias Scythiæ post aspera gentis,
Prælia laurigero subeuntem Thesea curru,
Lætifici plausus missusque ad sidera vulgi, &c.[1]

Whanne Theseus, with werres longe and grete,
The aspre folke of Cithee hadde overcome,
Tho, laurer crouned, in his chare, goold beete,[2]
Home to his countre houses[3] is ycome;
For which the peuple blisfulle alle and some,
So criden, that to the sterres hit went,
And hym to honouren did al hir entent.

Before this duke, in signe of victorie,
The trompes come, and in his baner large,
The ymage of Marse;[4] and in tokyn of glorye,
Men myght see of treasoure many a charge,
Many a bright helme, and many a spere and targe,
Many a fressh knyght, and many a blisful route,
On hors, on foot, in al the feeld aboughte.

Ypolita[5] his wif, the hardy quene
Of Cithea, that he conquerid hadde,
With Emelye her younge suster sheene,
Faire in a chare of goold he with hym ladde,
That al the ground abought hir chare she spradde
With brightnesse of beaute in hir face,
Fulfilled of largesse and of al grace.

With his tryumphe, and laurere crowned thus,
In alle the floure of fortunes yeving,
Lete I this noble prynce, this Theseus,
Toward Attenes in his way ridyng,
And fonde I wil inne shortly to brynge,
The sley weye of that I gan to wryte,
Of quene Anelyda and fals Arcyte.

---

[1] This is taken from the *Thebais* of Statius, lib. xii. 519.
[2] Ornamented with gold.—See vol v. p. 99, note 1.
[3] That is, 'To the houses of his country,' or to his home.
[4] See vol. i. p. 119.
[5] See vol. i. p. 115.

Mars, that thorugh his furious cours of yre,
The oolde wreth of Juno to fulfille,
Hath sette the peples hertys both on fyre
Of Thebes and Grece, and everych other to kille
With blody speres, restid never stille,
But thronge now here, now ther, among hem bothe,
That everych other slowgh, so were thei wrothe.

For whanne Amphiorax and Tideus,
Ypomedon and Prothonolexe also
Were dede, and slayn proude Campaneus,
And whan the wretched Theban brethren two[1]
Were slayne, and kyng Adrastus home ygoo,
So desolate stoode Thebes and so bare,
That no wighte coude remedye of his care.

And whanne the olde Creon gan espye,
How that the blode royal was broughte down,
He helde the cite by his tyrannye,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To ben his frendes, and dwellyn in the toun.
Soo what for love of hym, and what for awe,
The noble folke were to the towne ydrawe.

Among alle these, Anelyda the quene
Of Ermonye[2] was in that towne dwellynge,
That fairer was thanne is the sonne shene,
Thorughoute the worlde so gan hir name sprynge,
That hir to seen hadde every wight likynge;
For, as of trouthe, is ther noon hir liche,
Of alle the women in this worlde riche.[3]

Yong was this quene, of twenty yere of eeld,
Of mydel stature, and of soch fairnesse,
That Nature hadde a joye hir to beheelde,

[1] Eteocles and Polynices. [2] Armenia.

[3] Riche is here the Anglo-Saxon rice, kingdom, and in this connexion means the kingdom of this world. Thus, in *The Romance of King Horn*:—

'Nis none his yliche
In none kinges ryche.'

And for to spekyn of hir stedfastnesse,
She passed both Penelope and Lucresse,
And shortly, if she shal be comprehended,
In hir myghte nothyng ben amendid.

This Theban knyghte eek, for sothe to seyne,
Was yong, therto withal a lusty knyght,
But he was double in love, and nothynge pleyne,
And subtil in that crafte over eny wighte,
And with his kunnyng wan this lady brighte:
For soo ferforth he gan hire trouth assure,
That she hym trusted above eche creature.

What sholde I seyne? she loveth Arcyte so
That whanne that he was absent eny throwe,
Anoon hir thoughte hir herte brast on two?
For in hir sighte to hir he bar hym lowe,
Soo that she wende have alle his herte yknow;
But he was fals, it was but feyned chere,
As nedith not to men soche crafte to lere.[1]

But neverthelesse ful mykel busynesse
Hadde he, er that he myght his lady wynne,
And swor he wolde dye for distresse,
Or from his witte he seid he wolde twynne.
Allas the while! for it was routhe and synne,
That she upon his sorwes wolde rewe,
But noothing thinketh the fals as doth the trewe.

Hire fredom fonde Arcyte in such manere,
That al hisen is that hirs was, moche or lyte;
Ne to noo creature ne made she cheer,
Ferther thanne it likid to Arcyte;
Ther was no lakke with which he myghte hir wyte,
She was so ferforth sette hym to plese,
That al that liked hym it did her ese.[2]

[1] That is, 'As such craft comes to man by nature, he had no need to learn it.'

[2] The Harl. MS. 372 reads *hit did her herte an ese*; but as this makes the line too long, Speght's reading has been retained.

Ther nas to hir noo maner letter sente
That touched love, from any maner wight,
That she ne shewid it hym or it was brente;
Soo pleyne she was, and did hir fulle myghte,
That she nyl hiden noothyng from hir knyghte,
Lest he of any untrouthe hire upbreyde;
Withoute bode his herte she obeyde.

And eeke he made hym jelous over here,
That what that eny man hadde to hir seyde,
Anoon he wolde preyen hir to swere
What was that worde, or make hym evil apeide;
Than wende she oute of hir wytte have breide,
But alle was but sleighte and flaterye;
Withoute love he feyned jelousye.

And alle this toke she so deboneirly,
That alle his wille, her thought it skilful thyng;
And evere the lenger she loved hym tendirly,
And did hym honour as he were a kyng.
Hir hert was wedded to hym with a ryng;
For soo ferforth upon trouthe is hire entente,
That where he goth, hir herte with hym wente.

Whanne she shal ete, on hym is soo hir thought,
That wele unneth of mete toke she keepe;
And whanne she was to hir reste broughte,
On hym she thoughte alwey til that she sleepe;
Whanne he was absente, prively she weepe.
Thus liveth faire Anelyda the quene,
For fals Arcyte, that did hir al this tene.

This fals Arcyte, of his newefanglenesse,
For she to hym so lowly was and trewe,
Tooke lesse deynte for hir stedfastnesse,[1]
And sawe another lady, proude and newe,
And right anoon he cladde hym in hire hewe,—

[1] That is, 'Valued her steadfastness less.'

Wote I nought whether in white, reed, or grene,—
And falsid faire Anelyda the quene.

But neverthelesse, grete wonder was in noone
Though he were fals, for tis the kynde of man,
Sith Lameth[1] was, that is so longe agoone,
To ben in love so false as ever he can;
He was the first fader that began
To loven twoo, and was in bigamye.
And he fonde tentes first, but if men lye.

This fals Arcyte sumwhat must he feyne,
Whanne he wex fals, to cover his tratrie,
Right as an hors, that can bothe bite and pleyne;[2]
For he bar hir in honde of trecherye,
And swor he coude hire doublenesse espye,
Soo that alle was falsnesse that she to hym mente;
Thus swor this thefe, and forth his wey hath wente.

Alas! what herte mighte endure hit,
For routhe or woo, hir sorwe for to telle?
Or what man hath the conning or the witte?
Or what man mighte wythynne the chambre dwelle,
If I to hym rehersen shal the helle
That suffrith fayre Anelyda the quene,
For fals Arcyte, that did hir alle this tene?

She wepith, waileth, and swouneth pitously,
To ground ded she falleth as a stone;
Crampisheth hire lymmes crokidly;
She spekith as hir witte were al agone;
Other colour than asshen hath she none,
Ne non other worde speketh she moche or lyte,
But 'Mercy! cruel herte myne, Arcyte!'

And thus endurith, til that she was thus mate
That she nade foote, on which she may sustene,
But forth[3] languyshyng ever in this estate,

[1] Lamech.—See Gen. iv. 19.
[2] 'Like a wicked horse, which generally shrieks when it bites.'
[3] Goeth is understood before forth. This is a very usual ellipsis.

Of which Arcyte hath nother routhe ne tene;
His herte was elleswhere newe and grene;
That on hir woo, ne deyneth hym not to thynke;
Hym rekkith never wher she flete or synke.

His newe lady holdith hym so narowe
Up by the brydel, at the staves ende,
That every worde he dred it as an arwe;
Hir daungier made hym bothe bowe and bende,
And as hir luste, made hym turne or wende;
For she ne graunted hym in hire lyvynge,
No grace, whi that he hath lust to synge;

But drof hym forthe, unnethe lyst hir knowe
That he was servaunt unto hir ladyshippe;
But leest that he were proude, she heelde hym lowe.
Thus servith he, withoute mete or sippe,[1]
She sendith hym now to londe, and now to shippe,
And for she yaf hym daunger alle his fille,
Therefore she hadde hym at hire owen wille.

Ensample of this, ye thrifty wommen alle,
Take hede of Annelyda and fals Arcyte,
That for hir list hym hire dere herte calle,
And was soo meke, therefore he loved hir lyte;
The kynde of mannes herte is to delite
On thyng that straunge is, al so God me save!
For what thei may not gete, that wolde thei have.

Now turne we to Anelyda ayen,
That pyneth day by day in languishinge;
But whanne she saw that hire ne gatte no geyn,
Upon a day, ful sorowfully wepynge,
She cast hir for to make a compleynyng;
And with hire owen hande she gan it wryte,
And sent it to hir Theban knyghte Arcyte.

[1] The MS. reads *fee or sheep;* but Speght's reading has been retained as better.

THE COMPLEYNT OF FAIRE ANELYDA UPON FALS ARCYTE

'Soo thirlid with the poynte of remembraunce,
The swerde of sorwe, whette with fals plesaunce,
Myn herte, bare of blisse, and blake of hewe,
That torned is to quakyng alle my daunce,
My suerte in a whaped countenaunce,
Sith it avayleth noughte to ben trewe:
For who soo trewest is, it shal her riwe,
That serveth love, and doth hir observaunce
Alwey to oon, and chaungith for noon newe.

'I wote my silf as wele as any wighte,
For I loved oon, with alle myn herte and myghte
More thanne my silf an hundred thousand sithe,
And clepid hym myn herte life, my knyghte,
And was al his, as ferre as it was righte,
And whanne that he was glad, than was I blithe,
And his disese was my dethe as swithe,
And he ayein, his trouth me hadde yplighte,
For evermore hys lady me to kithe.

'Alas! now hath he lefte me causeles,
And of my woo he is so routheles,
That with oo worde hym lust not ones deyne,
To brynge ayein my sorowful herte in pees,
For he is caughte up in another lees;
Right as hym lust, he laugheth at my peyne,
And I ne can myn herte not restreyne
That I ne love hym alwey neverthelesse,
And of al this I note to whom me pleyne.

'And shal I pleyne, (allas! the harde stounde!)
Unto my foo, that yaf myn herte a wounde,
And yit desireth that myn harme be more?
Nay, certis! ferther wil I never founde
Noon other helpe my sores for to sounde;
My destenye hath shapen it so yore,
I wil noon other medicyn ne loore,

I wil ben ay there I was ones bounde,
That I have seide, be seide for evermore.

'Allas! where is become your gentilnesse?
Youre wordes fulle of plesaunce and humblesse?
Your observaunces in soo lowe manere?
And your awaytyng, and your busynesse,
Upon me that ye calleden your maistresse,
Your sovereyne lady in this worlde here?
Allas! is there noon other worde ne chere,
Ye vouchesauf upon myn hevynesse?
Allas! your love, I bye hit al to dere.

'Now certis, swete, though that ye
Thus causeles the cause be,
Of my deed adversite,
Your manly reson ought it to respite,
To sleen your frende, and namely me,
That never yet in no degre
Offended yow, as wisely he
That all woot of woo my soule quyte.

'But for I shewyd you, Arcyte,
Al that men wolde to me wryte,
And was so bysy you to delyte,
Myn honour sauf, meke, kynde, and fre,
Therefore ye put on me this wyte:
And of me ye rekke not a myte,
Though the swerde of sorwe byte
My wooful herte, thorugh your cruelte.[1]

'My swete foo, whi do ye soo for shame?
And thinke ye that furthrid be your name,
To love a newe, and ben untrewe aye,
And put yow in sclaunder now and blame,
And doo to me adversite and grame,

[1] This, and the foregoing stanza, are in a different metre. They are composed of eight, instead of nine verses, and each verse consists of four, instead of five, iambic feet.

That love you most, God thou it wost! alweye?
Yet torne ayein, and be pleyne som daye,
And torne al this, that hath be mys, to game;
And 'al foryive,'[1] while that I lyve may.

'Loo, herte myn, al this is for to seyne,
As whethir shal I preye or elles pleyne?
Which is the way to doon you to be trewe?
For either mot I have you in my cheyne,
Or with the deth ye mote departe us tweyne;
There been noon other mene weyes newe,
For God soo wisly on my soule rewe,
As verrily ye sleen me with the peyne;
That may ye see unfeyned on myn hewe.

'For thus ferforth have I my dethe soughte,
My silf I murdre with my pryvye thoughte;
For sorwe and routhe of your unkyndenesse,
I wepe, I wake, I fast, al helpith nought;
I weyve joye that is to speke of ought,
I voyde companye, I flee gladnesse;
Who may avaunte hir bette of hevynesse,
Thanne I? and to this plite have ye me broughte,
Withoute gilte, me needith no witnesse.

'And shal I pray, and weyve wommanhede?
Nay! rather deth, than doo soo foule a dede,
And axe mercy, and giltlesse! what nede?[2]
And if I pleyne what lif I lede,
You rekketh nought; that knowe I oute of drede,
And if I to you myn othes bede,
For myn excuse, a scorne shal be my mede,
Bele chere flourith, but it wil not seede,
Ful long agoon I ought have taken heede;[3]

---

[1] *Al forgive* appears to be an idiomatic expression, meaning 'all is forgiven.'

[2] That is, 'What need is there to ask mercy when I am guiltless?'

[3] That is, 'I might have long ago perceived that your expressions of love were only flowery protestations, which produce no fruit or seed.'

'For though I hadde you to morwe ageyne,
I myght as wele holde April fro reyne,
As holde you to make you be stedfast.
Almyghti God, of trouthe the sovereyn!
Where is that trouthe of man? who hath it slayn?
She that hem loveth, shal hem fynde as fast,
As in a tempest is a roten mast.
Is that a tame beest, that is aye feyne
To renne away, whanne he is leest agast?

'Now mercy, swete, if I mysseye!
Have I seide ought amys, I preye?
I noot, my wytte is al aweye.
I fare as doth the songe of chantepleure;[1]
For now I pleyne, and now I pleye,
I am so mased that I deye,
Arcyte hath borne awey the keye
Of al my world, and my good aventure.

'For in this world there is noo creature,
Walkyng in more discomfiture,
Than I, ne more sorwe endure,
And if I sleepe a furlonge weye or tweye,
Thanne thinketh me that your figure
Before me stant cladde in asure,[2]
Efte to profre a newe assure,
For to ben trewe, and mercy me to preye.

'The longe night, this wonder sight I drye,
And on the day for this affray I dye,
And of al this right naught, ywis, ye recche,
Ne nevermoo myn eyen two ben drye,
And to youre routhe, and to your trouthe I crye;

[1] Tyrwhitt says that this is a sort of proverbial expression for singing and weeping successively.—See Lydgate, *Trag.* st. the last, where he says that the book is—

'Lyke *Chantepleure*, now singing, now weping.'

In Harl MS. 4333 is a ballad which turns upon this expression. It begins, Moult vaut mieux pleure chante que ne fait chantepleure.

[2] See vol. v. p. 146, note 1.

But, wele awey! to ferre be thei to fecche,
Thus holdith me my destyne a wrecche,
But me to rede out of this drede or gye,
Ne may my witte, so weyke it is, not stretche.

'Thanne ende I thus, sith I may do noo more,
I yif it up for now and evermore;
For I shal never efte putte in balaunce
My sikernesse, ne lerne of love the lore;
But as the swan,[1] I have herde seyde ful yore,
Ayens his deth wol synge in his penaunce,
So synge I here the destyne or chaunce,
How that Arcyte, Anelyda so soore
Hath thrilled with the poynt of remembraunce.'

Whanne that Anelyda, this wofull quene,
Hath of her hande written in this wise,
With face deed, betwixe pale and grene,
She fel a-swoune; and sithe she gan to rise,
And unto Mars avoweth sacrifise
Within the temple, with a sorowful chere,
That shapen was, as ye schal plainly here.[2]

EXPLICIT.

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[1] See vol. iv. p. 203, note 4.
[2] This stanza is not in the Harl. MS.

THE HOUSE OF FAME.

[THE *Editio-princeps* of *The House of Fame* was that printed by Caxton in quarto, under the title of *The Boke of Fame*. It was reprinted, with other works of Chaucer, by Rycharde Pynson in 1526. In 1508 a version in the Scottish dialect, or orthography, was published in Edinburgh by Walter Chepman, called *The Maying or Disport of Chaucer*. The received text is that of Speght's edition of 1604, in which he has followed his customary system of adapting the orthography to that of his time, thus destroying both grammar and metre.

The text of the present edition is taken from a MS. on vellum, contained in a volume of miscellaneous poems by Chaucer, Lydgate, and others, marked 16 in the Fairfax Collection, Bod. Lib. This MS. is written in a fine, small hand, is richly illuminated, and the volume bears the autograph of Fairfax, and the date of 1450 on a fly-leaf. In this MS. the grammatical inflections, a point of the greatest moment, are generally preserved with accuracy throughout, and the metre is consequently restored by collation to regularity and correctness.

The central feature of *The House of Fame* is, as its title indicates, the description of the palace of the goddess; but that occupies only a small part of the poem. The allegory, as on other occasions, takes the form of a dream, in which the poet finds himself in the Temple of Venus, from whence he is carried by an eagle to a magnificent palace built upon a mountain of ice, and supported by rows of pillars, on which are inscribed the names of the most illustrious poets. Here he finds the goddess seated on her throne, dispensing her judgments to the crowds who come to solicit her favours. The caprice and injustice of her decrees constitute the satire of the piece. Leaving the palace to seek for further information, Chaucer is again caught up by the eagle, and conveyed to a house sixty miles in length, built of twigs, and continu-

ally whirling about. Under this strange mansion are collected, in the forms of their original propagators, all the rumours current upon earth, which, issuing out through innumerable doors, windows, and crevices, ultimately fly to the presence of the goddess, who assigns a name and duration to each.

Warton infers, from the frequent introduction of similes drawn from continental scenes and customs, that *The House of Fame* is a translation from the Provençal; and amongst other evidences of a foreign origin, points out two places in which the eagle addresses the poet under the name of Peter. The continental allusions, however, may be explained without referring them to a Provençal author. In Chaucer's time a considerable part of the British dominions lay on the continent; France was the native country of many of our aristocracy; and it can be easily supposed that a courtly poet, like Chaucer, might designedly choose his images from abroad, for the purpose of imparting an air of refinement and elegance to his verse. With respect to the name of Peter, Warton is in error in supposing that it is addressed to Chaucer. It is not employed as a name at all, but as an oath, or exclamation, very common at that period, and really meaning 'By Saint Peter!'

In none of his other poems has Chaucer displayed such an extent of knowledge, or drawn his images from such a variety of sources. The Arabic system of numeration, then lately introduced into Europe, the explosion of gunpowder, and the theory of sound, may be mentioned as examples of the topics of illustration and disquisition in which he abounds. His intimate acquaintance with classical authors is exhibited in the felicitous judgments he pronounces on their writings. For instance, what can be more happy than the distinction he indicates between Homer and Virgil, by placing each on a pillar of iron, characteristic of their warlike themes, but at the same time covering Virgil's iron with tin.

The octosyllabic measure adopted in *The House of Fame* is peculiarly suited to this style of familiar narrative interspersed

with humorous dialogue. It is that which Butler afterwards employed so successfully; and there are in this essentially different work, many passages that will remind the reader of the wit, erudition, and burlesque rhymes of *Hudibras.*]

GOD turne us every dreme, to goode!
For hyt is wonder thing, be[1] the roode,
To my wytte, what causeth swevenes
Eyther on morwes, or on evenes;
And why theffecte folweth of somme,
And of somme hit shal never come;
Why this is an avision,
And why this a revelacion;
Why this a dreme, why that a swevene,
And noght to every man lyche evene;
Why this a fantome, why these oracles,
I not: but who so of these meracles
The causes knoweth bet then I,
Devyne he; for I certeinly
Ne kan hem noght, ne never thinke
To besely my wytte to swinke,[2]
To knowe of hir significaunce
The gendres, neyther the distaunce
Of tymes of hem, ne the causis,
For why this more then that cause is;[3]
As yf folkys complexiouns,
Make hem dreme of reflecciouns;
Or ellis thus, as other sayne,
For to grete feblenesse of her brayne,

---

[1] It may save the reader trouble to observe that in the MS. Fairfax 16, from which the text of this poem is taken, the word *by* is generally written *be*, as it was pronounced.

[2] *Swinke* is here a verb active, governing *my witte*. The meaning is, 'To belabour my wit too busily.'

[3] This line is somewhat obscure. The meaning appears to be, 'Why any one circumstance [the complexion, or feebleness of brain, or abstinence, or sickness, &c.] rather than another, should be the cause of dreams.'

By abstinence, or by sekenesse,
Prison, stewe or grete distresse;
Or ellis by disordynaunce,
Or naturel accustumaunce,
That somme man is to curiouse
In studye, or melancolyouse;
Or thus, so inly ful of drede,
That no man may hym bote bede;[1]
Or ellis that devocion
Of somme, and contemplacion,
Causeth suche dremes ofte;
Or that the cruelle lyfe unsofte
Whiche those ilke lovres leden,
Oft hopen over moche or dreden,
That purely her impressions
Causeth hem avisions;
Or yf that spiritis have the myght
To make folke to dreme anight;
Or yf the soule, of propre kynde,
Be so perfit as men fynde,
That yt forwote that ys to come,
And that hyt werneth al and some
Of everyche of her aventures,
Be avisions, or be figures,
But that oure flessh ne hath no myghte
To understonde hyt arighte,
For hyt is werned to derkly;
But why the cause is, noght wote I.
Wele worthe[2] of this thinge grete clerkes,
That trete of this, and other werkes;
For I of noon opinion
Nyl as now make mensyon;

[1] Speght reads *rede*.

[2] *Worthe* is a verb, of which *grete clerkes* is the subject. It often occurs in combination with *wele* and *woe*, and appears to mean *to attribute*. Thus the meaning of this sentence would be, 'Great scholars attribute a great value to this thing;' and the exclamation, 'Woe worth the day,' would mean, 'May evil be attributed to this day.' Thus the worth of a thing means the value attributed to it.

But oonly that the holy roode[1]
Turne us every dreme to goode;
For never sith that I was borne,
Ne no man elles me beforne,
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
So wonderful a dreme as I,
The tenthe day now of Decembre;
The whiche, as I kan yow remembre,
I wol yow telle everydele.
But at my begynnynge, trusteth wele,
I wol make invocacion,
With special devocion
Unto the god of slepe anoon,
That dwelleth in a cave of stoon,
Upon a streme that cometh fro Lete,[2]
That is a floode of helle unswete,
Besyde a folke men clepeth Cymerie;[3]
There slepeth ay this god unmerie,
With his slepy thousand sonnes,
That alwey for to slepe hir wone is;
That to this god that I of rede,
Prey I, that he wolde me spede,
My swevene for to telle aryght,
If every dreme stonde in his myghte.
And he that mover ys of alle
That is and was, and ever shalle,
So yive hem joye that hyt here,
Of alle that they dreme to-yere;
And for to stonde al in grace
Of her loves, or in what place

---

[1] The Cross.

[2] In the margin of the MS. is the following Latin note. 'Ovidius: tamen exit ab imo, Rivus aque lethes.' It is from the description of the Palace of Somnius in the xith book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which had already supplied Chaucer with the original of the description in *The Boke of the Duchesse*.—See *ante*, p. 141.

[3] Here again is a gloss in the margin. 'Unde Ovidius, lio. xio. E. t prope Cimmerios longo spelunca recessu,' &c.

That hem were levest for to stonde,
And shelde hem fro poverte and shonde,
And fro unhappe and eche disese,
And sende hem alle that may hem plese,
That take hit wele and skorne hit noghte,
Ne hyt mysdeme in her thoghte,
Thorugh maliciouse entencion.
And who so, thorgh presumpcion,
Or hate, or skorne, or thorgh envye,
Dispite, or jape, or vilanye,
Mysdeme hyt, pray I Jhesus God,
That dreme he barefote, dreme he shod,
That every harme, that any man
Hath had syth that the worlde began,
Befalle hym thereof, or he sterve,
And graunte he mote hit ful deserve,[1]
Loo, with suche a conclusion,
As had of his avision
Cresus, that was kynge of Lyde,[2]
That high upon a gebet dide.
This prayer shal he have of me;
I am no bet in charitye.
Now herkeneth, as I have yow seyde,
What that I met or I abreyde.
Of Decembre the tenthe day,
Whan hit was nighte, to slepe I lay,
Ryghte ther as I was wonte to done,
And fille on slepe wonder sone,
As he that wery was for goo[3]
On pilgrymage myles two

[1] *Deserve* may possibly mean only *obtain*, like *mereo* in theology. But the prayer that the unhappy person who misinterprets this dream may not only suffer, but deserve, all these misfortunes, is more probably intended to add to the grotesque exaggeration of the whole passage.

[2] By some supposed to have been put to death by being obliged to drink molten gold.—See vol. v. p. 163, note 5.

[3] That is, 'As he that was weary from having gone,' &c. St. Leonard was the patron of captives, whose fetters he was supposed to

To the corseynt Leonarde,
To make lythe of that was harde.
But as I slept, me mette I was
Withyn a temple ymade of glas;
In whiche ther were moo ymages
Of golde, stondynge in sondry stages,
And moo ryche tabernacles,
And with perre moo pynacles,
And moo curiouse portreytures,
And queynt maner of figures
Of golde werke, than I sawgh ever.[1]
But certeynly I nyste never
Wher that I was, but wel wiste I,
Hyt was of Venus redely,
This temple; for in portreyture,
I sawgh anoon ryghte hir figure
Naked fletynge in a see.
And also on hir hede, parde,
Hir rose garlonde white and rede,
And hir combe to kembe hyr hede,
Hir dowves, and daun Cupido,
Hir blynde sone, and Vulcano,
That in his face was ful browne.[2]
But as I romed up and downe,
I fonde that on a walle ther was
Thus writen on a table of bras:—
'I wol now say yif I kan,[3]
The armes, and also the man,

---

unloose. There appears to be some burlesque allusion which we cannot trace.

[1] This is one of many passages in Chaucer's poems which show that he took an interest in architecture, an art which attained its highest perfection perhaps a little previous to his time. This taste probably led to his appointment, in 1389, to the office of clerk of the works for the royal palaces.—See Life, vol. i. p. 30.

[2] Warton supposes that Chaucer derived the idea of covering the walls of the Temple of Venus with paintings denoting the power of the goddess, from Marie's *Lay of Guigemar*, orfrom Boccaccio's *Theseid*.

[3] This is a translation from the first few lines of the *Æneid*, from which the succeeding account of the adventures of Æneas is taken.

That first came, thorgh his destanee,
Fugityte of Troy countree,
In Itayle, with ful moche pyne,
Unto the strondes of Lavyne.'
And tho began the story anoon,
As I shal telle yow echoon.
First sawgh I the destruccion
Of Troye, thorgh the Greke Synon,
With his fals forswerynge,
And his chere and his lesynge
Made the hors broght into Troye,
Thorgh which Troyens lost al her joye.
And aftir this was grave, allas,
How Ilyon assayled was
And wonne, and kynge Priam yslayne,
And Polite his sone, certayne,
Dispitously of daun Pirrus.[1]
And next that sawgh I how Venus
Whan that she sawgh the castel brende,
Downe fro the hevene gan descende,
And bad hir sone Eneas flee;
And how he fled, and how that he
Escaped was from al the pres,
And tooke his fader, Anchises,
And bare hym on hys bakke away,
Cryinge 'Allas and welaway.'
The whiche Anchises in hys honde
Bare the goddes of the londe,
Thilke that unbrende were.
And I sawgh next in al hys fere,
How Creusa, daun Eneas wife,
Whiche that he lovede as hys lyfe,
And hir yonge sone Iulo,
And eke Askanius also,[2]

[1] In the margin of the MS. is this gloss.: 'Unde Virgilius: Ecce autem elapsus Pirri de cæde Polites.'

[2] 'And eke Ascanius also' must mean 'who was also called Ascanius;' for Ascanius and Iulus were the same person.

Fleden eke with drery chere,
That hyt was pitee for to here;
And in a forrest as they went,
At a turnynge of a went,
How Creusa was yloste, allas!
That dede, not I how she was;[1]
How he hir soughte, and how hir goste
Bad hym to flee the Grekes hoste,
And seyde he most unto Itayle,
As was hys destanye, sauns faille,
That hyt was pitee for to here,
When hir spirite gan appere
The wordes that she to hym seyde,
And for to kepe hir sone hym preyde.
Ther sawgh I grave eke how he,
Hys fader eke, and his meyne,
With hys shippes gan to sayle
Towardes the countree of Itaylle,
As streighte as that they myghte goo.
Ther saugh I the, crwel Juno,
That art daun Jupiteres wife,
That hast yhated, al thy lyfe,
Alle the Troyanysshe bloode,
Renne and crye, as thou were woode,
On Eolus, the god of wyndes,
To blowe oute of alle kyndes
So lowde, that he sholde drenche
Lord, lady, grome, and wenche
Of al the Troyan nacion,
Withoute any savacion.
Ther saugh I suche tempeste aryse,
That every herte myghte agryse,
To see hyt peynted on the walle.
Ther saugh I grave eke withalle,
Venus, how ye, my lady dere,
Wepynge with ful woful chere,

[1] That is, 'So that I know not how she was dead,' or died.

Prayen Jupiter on hye
To save and kepe that navye
Of the Troyan Eneas,
Sythe that he hir sone was.
Ther saugh I Joves Venus kysse,
And graunted of the tempest lysse.[1]
Ther saugh I how the tempest stent,
And how with alle pyne he went,
And prevely toke arryvage
In the contree of Cartage;
And on the morwe how that he,
And a knyghte highte Achate,
Mette with Venus that day,
Goynge in a queynt array,
As she had ben an hunteresse,
With wynde blowynge upon hir tresse;
How Eneas gan hym to pleyne,
Whan that he knewe hir, of his peyne;
And how his shippes dreynte were,
Or elles lost, he nyste where;
How she gan hym comforte thoo,
And bad hym to Cartage goo,
And ther he sholde his folke fynde,
That in the see were lefte behynde.
And, shortly of this thyng to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dido, quene of that contree,
That, shortly for to telle, she
Became hys love, and lete hym doo
That that weddynge longeth too.
What sholde I speke it more queynte,
Or peyne me my wordes peynte,
To speke of love? hyt wol not be;
I kannot of that faculte.

---

[1] In MS. Fairfax 16, instead of *lysse*, *stent* has been written by mistake, from the next line, which is omitted altogether. Speght's reading has therefore been adopted.

And eke to telle the manere
How they aqueynteden in fere,
Hyt were a longe processe to telle,
And over longe for yow to dwelle.
  Ther saugh I grave, how Eneas
Tolde Dido every caas,
That hym was tyd upon the see.
  And aftir grave was how shee
Made of hym, shortly at oo worde,
Hyr lyfe, hir love, hir luste, hir lorde;
And did hym al the reverence,
And leyde on hym al dispence,
That any woman mighte do,
Wenynge hyt hadde al be so,
As he hir swore; and herby demed
That he was good, for he suche semed.
  Allas, what harme dothe apparence,
Whan hit is fals in existence!
For he to hir a traytour was;
Wherfore she slowe hir selfe, allas!
  Loo, how a woman dothe amys,
To love hym that unknowe ys!
For, be Cryste, lo thus yt fareth;
Hyt is not al golde that glareth.[1]
For, al so browke I wel myn hede,
Ther may be under godelyhede
Kovered many a shrewde vice;
Therfore be no wyght so nyce,
To take a love oonly for chere,
Or speche, or for frendly manere;
For this shal every woman fynde,
That some man, of his pure kinde[2]

---

[1] This proverb is still current, and affords the moral to Gray's poem *On the death of a favourite cat.*—See vol. iii. p. 37, note 2.

[2] Instead of this line the scribe of the Fairfax MS. passed on to the fourth succeeding one, which ends with the same word, omitting all that intervenes. In this mistake it is followed by the Bodleian, 638. The omitted lines have been supplied from Speght.

Wol shewen outwarde the fairest,
Til he have caught that what him lest;
And than wol he causes find,
And sweren that she is unkynde,
Or fals, or prevy double was.
Alle this sey I be Eneas
And Dido, and her nyce lest,
That loved al to sone a gest;[1]
Therfore I wol seye a proverbe,
That he that fully knoweth therbe,
May savely leye hyt to his eye;[2]
Withoute drede, this ys no lye.
But let us speke of Eneas,
How he betrayed hir, allas!
And lefte hir ful unkyndely.
So whan she sawgh al outterly,
That he wolde hir of trouthe fayle,
And wende fro hir to Itayle,
She gan to wringe hir hondes two.
'Allas!' quod she, 'what me ys wo!
Allas! is every man thus trewe,
That every yere wolde have a newe,
Yf hit so longe tyme dure?
Or elles three, paraventure?[3]
As thus:—of one he wolde have fame
In magnyfying of hys name;
Another for frendshippe, seyth he;
And yett ther shal the thridde be,
That shal be take for delyte,
Loo, or for synguler profite.'
In suche wordes gan to pleyne
Dydo of hir grete peyne,

---

[1] —— 'Proh Jupiter! ibit
Hic, ait; et nostris illuserit *advena* regnis?
Æneid, iv. 590.

[2] He who knows the medicinal properties of the herb may apply it as a remedy to his eye with safety; otherwise he may blind himself.

[3] Opposite this line, in the MS., is a marginal note, apparently ironical: 'Cavete vos innocentes mulieres.'

As me mette redely;
None other auttour alegge I.
'Allas!' quod she, 'my swete herte,
Have pitee on my sorwes smerte,
And slee mee not! goo noght awey!
'O woful Dido, weleaway!'
Quod she to her selfe thoo.
'O Eneas! what wol ye doo?
O, that your love, ne your bonde,
That ye han sworne with your ryght honde,
Ne my crewel deth,' quod she,
'May holde yow stille here with me!
O, haveth of my deth pitee!
Ywys my dere herte, ye
Knowen ful well that never yit,
As fer forth as ever I had wytte,
Agylte yow in thoght ne dede.
O, have ye men suche godelyhede
In speche, and never a dele of trouthe?
Allas, that ever hadde routhe
Any woman on any man!
Now see I wel, and telle kan,
We wrecched wymmen konne noon arte;
For certeyne, for the more parte,
Thus we be served everychon.
How sore that ye men konne gron,
Anoon as we have yow receyved,
Certenly we ben deceyved;[1]
For, though your love laste a seson,
Wayte upon the conclusyon,
And eke how that ye determynen,
And for the more part diffynen.
O, weleawey that I was borne!
For thorgh yow is my name lorne,
And alle youre actes redde and songe
Over al thys londe, on every tonge.

[1] This line is omitted in MS. Fairfax 16. It is supplied in MS. Bodleian 638.

O wikke Fame! for ther nys
Nothinge so swifte, lo, as she is.
O, sothe is, every thynge is wyste,
Though hit be kevered with the myste.
Eke, though I myghte dure ever,
That I have do rekever I never,
That I ne shal be seyde, allas,
I shamed be thorugh Eneas,
And that I shal thus juged be:—
Loo, ryght as she hath done, now she[1]
Wol do eftesones hardely.
Thus seyth thé peple prevely.'
But that is do, nis not to done;
For al hir compleynt ne al hir moone,
Certeyne avayleth hir not a stre.
And when she wiste sothely he
Was forthe unto his shippes agoon,
She into hir chambre wente anoon,
And called on hir suster Anne,[2]
And gan hir to compleyne thanne;
And seyde, that she cause was,
That she first loved hym, alas,
And thus counseylled hir thertoo.
But what? whan this was seyde and doo,
She rofe hir selfe to the herte,
And dyed thorgh the wounde smerte.
But al the maner how she dyede,
And alle the wordes that she seyde,
Who so to knowe hit hath purpos,
Rede Virgile in Eneydos,
Or the epistele of Ovyde,[3]
What that she wrote or that she dyde;
And nor hyt were to longe tendyte,
Be God, I wolde hyt here write.

[1] This seems to have been a Latin proverb. In the margin is written: 'Cras poterunt turpia fieri, secut heri.'

[2] In the margin of the MS. are the words of Dido to her sister: 'O Anna, tu primi ferentem,' &c.

[3] Ovid, *Heroides*, Ep. vii.

But, weleaway! the harme, the routhe,
That hath betyd for suche untrouthe,
As men may ofte in bokes rede,
And al day se hyt yet in dede,
That for to thynke hyt a tene is.
Loo Demophon,[1] duke of Athenys,
How he forswore hym ful falsly,
And trayed Phillis wikkidly,
That kynges doghtre was of Trace,
And falsly gan hys terme pace;
And when she wiste that he was fals,
She honge hir selfe ryght be the hals,
For he had doo hir suche untrouthe;
Loo! was not this a woo and routhe?
Eke lo how fals and reccheles
Was to Breseyda Achilles,[2]
And Paris to Enone,[3]
And Jason to Isiphile,[4]
And eft Jason to Medea,[5]
Ercules to Dyanira;[6]
For he left her for Yole,
That made hym cache his dethe, parde.
How fals eke was he, Theseus;
That, as the story telleth us,
How he betrayed Adriane;
The devel be hys soules bane!
For had he lawghed, had he loured,
He moste hane be devoured,
Yf Adriane ne had ybe.
And, for she had of hym pite,
She made hym fro the dethe escape,
And he made hir a ful fals jape;
For aftir this, withyn a while,
He lefte hir slepynge in an ile,
Deserte allone, ryght in the se,
And stale away, and lete hir be;

[1] Ovid, *Heroides*, Ep. ii. [2] *Ib.* Ep. iii. [3] *Ib.* Ep. v.
[4] *Ib.* Ep. vi. [5] *Ib.* Ep. xii. [6] *Ib.* Ep. ix.

And tooke hir suster Phedra thoo
With him, and gan to shippe goo.
And yet he had yswore to hire,
On alle that ever he myghte swere,
That so she saved hym hys lyfe,
He wolde hane take hir to hys wife,
For she desired nothing ellis,
In certeyne, as the booke tellis,[1]
But to excusen Eneas
Fullyche of al his trespas,
The booke sayth Mercury sauns fayle,
Bade hym go into Itayle,
And leve Auffrikes regioun,
And Dido and hir faire toun.
Tho sawgh I grave how that to Itayle
Daun Eneas gan for to sayle;
And how the tempest al began,
And how he lost hys sterisman,[2]
Which that the stere, or he toke kepe,
Smote overe borde, loo, as he slepe.
And also sawgh I how Sybile
And Eneas, besyde an yle,
To helle wente, for to see
His fader Anchyses the free.
How he ther fonde Palinurus,
And Dido, and eke Deiphebus,
And every torment eke in helle
Sawgh he, which is longe to telle.
Which who so willeth for knowe,
He most rede many a rowe
On Virgile or in Claudian,
Or Daunte,[3] that hit telle kan.

---

[1] Ovid, *Heroides*, Ep. x. [2] *Scil.* Palinurus.

[3] For information on the wonders of the infernal regions Chaucer refers the reader to Claudian, because one of his poems is on the subject of the *Rape of Proserpine*. Dante is associated with him, of course on account of his *Inferno*. Tyrwhitt thinks it probable that Chaucer did not know Italian; but his frequent allusions to Dante seem to

Tho sawgh I grave al the aryvayle
That Eneas hadde in Itayle;
And with kyng Latyns hys trete,
And alle the batayles that hee
Was at hymselfe, and eke hys knyghtes,
Or he had al ywonne hys ryghtis;
And how he Turnus reft his lyfe,
And wanne Lavinia to his wife,
And alle the marvelouse signals
Of the goddys celestials;
How mawgree Juno, Eneas
For al hir sleighte and hir compas,
Acheved alle his aventure;
For Jupiter tooke of hym cure,
At the prayer of Venus,
The whiche I prey alwey save us,
And us ay of oure sorwes lyghte.
When I had seene al this syghte
In this noble temple thus,
'A lorde!' thought I, 'that madest us,
Yet sawgh I never suche noblesse
Of ymages, ne suche richesse,
As I sawgh grave in this chirche;
But not wote I whoo did hem wirche,
Ne where I am, ne what contree.
But now wol I goo oute and see,
Ryght at the wiket, yf I kan
See oughtwhere stiryng any man,
That may me telle where I am.'
When I oute at the dores cam,
I faste aboute me behelde.
Then sawgh I but a large felde,
As fer as that I myghte see,
Withouten toune, or house, or tree,

---

favour the contrary opinion. In *The Wife of Bathes Tale* several lines are translated from Dante; in *The Monkes Tale* the story of Hugolin of Pisa is taken from the *Inferno*, and a sentence is also cited from Dante in *The Legende of Gode Women*.

Or bussh, or gras, or eryd londe;
For al the felde nas but sonde,
As smale as man may se yt lye[1]
In the desert of Lybye;
Ne no maner creature,
That ys yformed be nature,
Ne sawgh I, me to rede or wisse.
'O Criste,' thought I, 'that art in blysse,
Fro fantome and illusion
Me save!' and with devocion
Myn eyen to the hevene I caste.
Thoo was I war atte laste,
That faste be the sonne, as hye
As kenne myght I with myn ye,
Me thought I sawgh an egle sore,
But that hit semed moche more
Then I had any egle seyne.
But, this as soothe as deth certeyne,
Hyt was of golde, and shone so bryghte,[2]
That never saugh men suche a syghte,
But if the hevene hadde ywonne
Al newe of God another sonne;
So shone the egles fetheres bryghte,
And somewhat downwarde gan hyt lyghte.

EXPLICIT LIBER PRIMUS.

LIBER SECUNDUS.

Now herkeneth every maner man,
That Englissh understonde kan,
And listeneth of my dreme to lere;
For nowe at erste shul ye here

[1] The MS., instead of *yt*, reads *yet*, which is so manifestly a mistake that *yt* has been adopted conjecturally. Speght reads *at eye*.

[2] The copyist has again, in this instance, been misled by the similarity of the rhymes, and passed on to the last line, omitting all those which intervene. They have been supplied from Speght.

So sely an avision,
That I saye ne Cipion,[1]
Ne kynge Nabugodonosor,[2]
Pharoo,[3] Turnus,[4] ne Elcanor,
Ne mette suche a dreme as this.
Now faire blisfulle, O Cipris,
So be my favor[5] at this tyme!
And ye me to endite and ryme
Helpeth, that in Pernaso dwelle,
Be Elicon the clere welle.
O Thought, that wrote al that I mette,
And in the tresorye hyt shette
Of my brayne! now shal men se
If any vertu in the be,
To telle al my dreme aryghte;
Now kythe thyn engyne[6] and thy myghte!
This egle of whiche I have yow tolde,
That shone with fetheres as of golde,
Which that so highe gan to sore,
I gan beholde more and more,
To se her beaute and the wonder;
But never was ther dynt of thonder,
Ne that thynge that men calle foudre,[7]
That smoote sometyme a toure to powdre,
And in his swifte comynge brende,
That so swithe gan descende,
As this foule whan hyt behelde,
That I a-roume[8] was in the felde;
And with hys grym pawes stronge,
Withyn hys sharpe nayles longe,
Me, fleyng, in a swappe he hente,
And with hys sours ayene up wente,

---

[1] See vol. iv. p. 189, note 1. [2] Daniel ii. [3] Genesis xli.
[4] Allusion to the mission of Iris to Turnus.—*Æneid.* ix.
[5] This word ought to be *favourer*, or perhaps *fautor*.
[6] *Engyne* here means *understanding*, from the Latin *ingenium*.
[7] *Foudre* is the thunderbolt.
[8] *A-roume* means roaming about.

Me caryinge in his clawes starke,
As lyghtly as I were a larke,
How high, I cannot telle yow,
For I came up, I nyste how.
For so astonyed and asweved
Was every vertu in my heved,
What with his sours and with my drede,
That al my felynge gan to dede;
For whi? hit was to grete affray.
Thus I longe in hys clawes lay,
Til at the last he to me spake
In mannes vois, and seyde, 'Awake!
And be not agaste, for shame!'
And called me tho by my name.[1]
And for I sholde the bet abreyde,
Me mette, he to me thus seyde,
Ryghte in the same vois and stevene,
That useth oon I koude nevene;[2]
And with that vois, soth for to seyne,
My mynde came to me ageyne,
For hit was goodely seyde to me,
So was hyt never wonte to be.
And herewithalle I gan to stere,
As he me in his fete bere,
Til that he felt that I had hete,
And felte eke tho myn herte bete.
And thoo gan he me to disporte,
And with wordes to comforte,
And seyde twyes, 'Seynte Mary!
Thou arte noyouse for to cary,
And nothynge nedith it, parde;
For, al so wis God helpe me,
As thou noon harme shalt have of this;
And this caas that betydde the is,

[1] This expression resembles the Homeric phrase ἐκ τ' ὀνόμαζε. Calling by the name denoted confidence and affection.

[2] There appears to be here some personal allusion, which it is impossible to trace.

Is for thy lore and for thy prowe,
Let see! darst thou yet loke nowe?
Be ful assured, boldely,
I am thy frende.' And therewith I
Gan for to wondren in my mynde.
'O God,' thought I, 'that madeste kynde,
Shal I noon other weyes dye?
Wher Joves wol me stellefye,[1]
Or what thinge may this sygnifye?
I neither am Ennok, ne Elye,[2]
Ne Romulus,[3] ne Ganymede,[4]
That was ybore up, as men rede,
To hevene with daun Jupiter,
And made the goddys botiller.'[5]
Loo, this was thoo my fantasye!
But he that bare me gan espye,
That I so thoughte and seyde this:—
'Thow demest of thy selfe amys;
For Joves ys not theraboute,
I dar wel put the out of doute,
To make of the as yet a sterre.
But er I bere the moche ferre,
I wol the telle what I am,
And whider thou shalt, and why I cam

---

[1] That is, 'Change me into a star,' an allusion to the metamorphoses of most of the heathen demi-gods.

[2] Enoch and Elijah, or Elias, were both translated.—See Gen. v. 24, and 2 Kings, ii. 11.

[3] Romulus was carried to heaven by Mars.—Ovid, *Met.* xiv. 821.

[4] Ganymede, the son of Tros, or Dardanus, carried up to Olympus by Jupiter's eagle to be his cup-bearer.

'—— qui nunc quoque pocula miscet,
Invitâque Jovi nectar Junone ministrat.'
OVID.—*Met.* x. 160.

[5] It is not easy to discover whether Chaucer intends this to be burlesque or not. The idea of Ganymede being *butler* to the gods appears ludicrous to us, who are accustomed to see the office performed by menial servants. But it was not so in the middle ages. Young gentlemen of high rank carved the dishes and poured out the wine at the tables of the nobility; and grace in the performance of these duties was highly prized. One of the oldest of our noble families derives its surname from the fact that its founder was butler to the king.

To do thys, so that thou take
Goode herte, and not for fere quake.'
'Gladly,' quod I. 'Now wel,' quod he:
'First, I, that in my fete have the,
Of whiche thou haste a fere and wonder,
Am dwellynge with the god of thonder,
Whiche that men callen Jupiter,
That dooth me flee ful ofte fer
To do al hys comaundement.
And for this cause he hath me sent
To the: now herke, be thy trouthe!
Certeyn he hath of the routhe,
That thou so longe trewely
Hast served so ententyfly
Hys blynd nevewe Cupido,
And faire Venus also,
Withoute guerdon ever yitte,
And neverthelesse hast set thy witte,
(Although in thy hede ful lyte is)
To make bookys, songes, and dytees[1]
In ryme, or elles in cadence,[2]
As thou best canst in reverence
Of Love, and of hys servantes eke,
That have hys servyse soght, and seke;
And peynest the to preyse hys arte,
Although thou haddest never parte;
Wherfore, al so God me blesse,
Joves halt hyt grete humblesse,
And vertu eke, that thou wolt make
A nyghte ful ofte thyn hede to ake,
In thy studye so thou writest,
And evermo of love enditest,

---

[1] This rhyme, and many others in the poem, will remind the reader of those which were afterwards used by Butler in his *Hudibras*, with such happy effect.

[2] It is difficult to understand what Chaucer means by compositions 'in cadence,' as opposed to rhyme. The nearest approach to this description is the rhythmical prose of *The Tale of Melibeus*, which appears to be continually running into blank verse.—See General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 57.

In honour of hym and preysynges,
And in his folkes furtherynges,
And in hir matere al devisest,
And noght hym nor his folke dispisest,
Although thou maiste goo in the daunce
Of hem that hym lyst not avaunce.
Wherfore, as I seyde, ywys,
Jupiter considereth wel this;
And also, beausire, other thynges;
That is, that thou hast no tydynges
Of Loves folke, yf they be glade,
Ne of noght elles that God made;
And noght oonly fro ferre contree,
That ther no tydynge cometh to thee,
Not of thy verray neyghbors,
That dwelle almoste at thy dors,
Thou herist neyther that nor this,
For when thy labour doon al is,
And hast ymade rekenynges,[1]
Instid of reste and newe thynges,
Thou goost home to thy house anoon,
And, al so dombe as any stone,
Thou sittest at another booke,
Tyl fully dasewyd ys thy looke,
And lyvest thus as an heremyte,[2]
Although thyn abstynence ys lyte.
And therfore Joves, thorgh hys grace,
Wol that I bere the to a place,
Which that hight the House of Fame,
To do the somme disport and game,
In somme recompensacion
Of labour and devocion

[1] It has been conjectured from this passage that *The House of Fame* was written while Chaucer was Comptroller of the Customs, to which office he was appointed in 1374, and from which he was dismissed in December, 1386.—See *Life*, vol. i. pp. 22 and 25.

[2] If this be a true picture of the poet's habits, he must have been a man of great industry; which, however, is sufficiently clear from the number of his literary productions.

That thou hast had, loo! causeles,
To Cupido the reccheles.
And thus this god, thorgh his merite,
Wol with somme maner thinge the quyte,
So that thou wolt be of goode chere.
For truste wel that thou shalt here,
When we be commen there as I seye,
Mo wonder thynges, dar I leye,
Of Loves folke moo tydynges,
Both sothe sawes and leysinges;
And moo loves newe begonne,
And longe yserved loves wonne;
And moo loves casuelly,
That betyde, no man wote why,
But as a blende man stert an hare;[1]
And more jolytee and fare,
While that they fynde love of stele,[2]
As thinketh hem, and over al wele;
Mo discordes, and moo jelousies,
Mo murmures, and moo novelries,
And moo dissymulacions,
And feyned reparacions;
And moo berdys in two oures
Withoute rasour or sisoures
Ymade,[3] than greynes be of sondes;
And eke moo holdynge in hondes,
And also mo renoveilaunces
Of olde forleten aqueyntaunces;
Mo love-dayes, and acordes[4]
Then on instrumentes ben cordes;

---

[1] Love won by long attendance is here contrasted with sudden passion, which is awakened without reason or premeditation, just as a hare is started by a blind man.

[2] *Love of stele* is love as true as steel.

[3] To *make the beard* is a translation of the French, *faire la barbe*, to shave, like *faire les ongles*, to cut the nails, and means, metaphorically, to deceive.

[4] For an explanation of *Love-dayes*, see vol. i. p. 89, note 2. *Acordes* seems to be almost synonymous.

And eke of love moo eschaunges,
Than ever cornes were in graunges;
Unnethe maistow trowen this?'
Quod he. 'Noo, helpe me God so wys!'.
Quod I. 'Noo? why?' quod he. 'For hytte
Were impossible to my witte,
Though Fame hadde alle the pies[1]
In al a realme, and alle the spies,
How that yet he sholde here al this,
Or they espie hyt.'—'O yis, yis!'
Quod he, to me, 'that kan I preve
Be reson, worthy for to leve,
So that thou yeve thyn advertence
To understonde my sentence.
'First shalt thou here where she dwelleth,
And so thyn owne boke[2] hyt tellith,
Hir paleys stant as I shal sey
Ryght even in myddes of the wey
Betwexen hevene, erthe, and see;
That whatsoever in al these three
Is spoken either prevy or aperte,
The aire therto ys so overte,
And stant eke in so just a place,
That every sowne mot to hyt pace,
Or what so cometh fro any tonge,
Be hyt rowned, red, or songe,
Or spoke in suerte or in drede,
Certeyn hyt most thider nede.[3]
'Now herkene wel; for why? I wille
Tellen the a propre skille,

---

[1] Mag-pies, used metaphorically for chattering persons, or spoil sports.—See vol. v. p. 133, note 2.

[2] The eagle would appear to allude to some book of Chaucer's, in which the Temple of Fame had already been described: but as we know of none such, the reference may possibly be to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, xii. 40; and this book may be called Chaucer's own, from his fondness for it.

[3] The regular form of the adverb would be *nedes*. It is written *nede* perhaps by poetical licence, to suit the rhyme.

And worthe a demonstracion
In myn ymagynacion.
'Geffrey, thou wost ryght wel this,
That every kyndely thynge that is,
Hath a kyndely stede ther he
May best in hyt conserved be;
Unto whiche place every thynge,
Thorgh his kyndely enclynynge,
Meveth for to come to,
Whan that it is awey therfro.
As thus, loo, thou maist al day se:—
Take any thinge that hevy be,
As stoon or lede, or thynge of weight,
And bere hyt never so hye on height,
Lat goo thyn hande; hit falleth doune.
Ryght so sey I, be fire, or sowne,
Or smoke, or other thynges lyghte,
Alwey they seke upward on highte,
While eche of hem is at his large;
Lyghte thynges upward, and dounward charge.[1]
And for this cause mayste thow see,
That every ryver to the see
Enclyned ys to goo by kynde.
And by these skilles, as I fynde,
Hath fysshe dwellynge in floode and see,
And trees eke in erthe be.
Thus every thinge by this reason
Hath his propre mansyon,
To which he seketh to repaire,
As there hit sholde not apaire.[2]
Loo, this sentence is knowen couthe
Of every philosophres mouthe,
As Aristotile and daun Platon,
And other clerkys many oon,

[1] *Charge* may, perhaps, mean heavy, or loaded, from the French *chargé*. The verb *seke* is understood from the last sentence, thus:—'Light things seek [*i. e.*, have a tendency to go] upward; and charge [heavy or loaded things] have a tendency to go downward.'

[2] In the MS. opposite this line is a gloss, 'but be kept.'

And to confirme my resoun,
Thou wost wel this, that speche is soun,
Or elles no man myght hyt here;
Now herke what I wol the lere.
'Soune ys noght but eyre ybroken,[1]
And every speche that ys yspoken,
Lowde or pryvee, foule or faire,
In his substaunce ys but eyre.
For as flaumbe ys but lyghted smoke,
Ryghte soo sowne ys eyre ybroke.
But this may be in many wyse,
Of which I wil the twoo devyse,
As soune that cometh of pipe or harpe.
For whan a pipe is blowen sharpe,
The eyre ys twyst with violence,
And rent: loo, this ys my sentence;
Eke, whan men harpe strynges smyte,
Whether hyt be moche or lyte,
Loo, with the stroke the eyre to-breketh;
And right so breketh hit whan men speketh.
Thus wost thou wel what thinge is speche.
'Now hennesforthe I wol the teche,
How every speche, or noyse, or soune,
Thurgh hys multiplicacioune,
Thogh hyt were piped of a mouse,
Mote nede come to Fames House.
I preve hyt thus:—Take hede now
Be experience, for yf that thow
Throwe on water now a stoon,
Well wost thow hyt wol make anoon
A litel roundelle as a sercle,
Paraunture brode as a covercle;
And ryght anoon thow shalt see wele,
That sercle wol cause another whele,
And that the thridde, and so forth, brother,
Every sercle causynge other,

[1] This will remind the reader of the theory of sounds maintained by the nobleman in *The Sompnour's Tale*.—See vol. ii. p. 121.

Wydder than hymselfe was.
And this fro roundell to compas,
Eche about other goynge,
Caused of otheres sterynge,
And multiplyinge evermoo,
Til that hyt so fer ygo
That hyt at bothe brynkes bee.
Although thou mowe hyt not ysee
Above, hyt gooth yet alwey under,
Although thou thenke hyt a grete wonder.
And who so seyth of trouthe I varye,
Bid hym proven the contrarye.[1]
And ryghte thus every worde, ywys,
That lowde or pryve yspoken ys,
Moveth first an eyre aboute,
And of this movynge, out of doute,
Another eyre anoon ys meved,
As I have of the watir preved,
That every cercle causeth other.
Ryght so of eyre, my leve brother;
Everych eyre other stereth
More and more, and speche up bereth,
Or voyse, or noyse, or worde, or soun,
Aye through multiplicacioun,
Til hyt be atte House of Fame;—
Take yt in ernest or in game.
'Now have I tolde, yf ye haven mynde,
How speche or soune, of pure kynde
Enclyned ys upwarde to meve;
This mayst thou fele wel I preve.
And that same place or stede, ywys,
That every thynge enclyned to ys,
Hath his kyndelyche stede:[2]
That sheweth hyt, withoute drede,

[1] The eagle here mistakes his position. Having stated his hypothesis, he requires his adversary to prove the contrary; whereas the *onus probandi* lies on himself.

[2] *Kyndely stede* means natural place, *i. e.*, the place assigned to it by

That kyndely the mansioun
Of everich speche, of every soun,
Be hyt eyther foule or faire,
Hath hys kynde place in ayre.
And syn that every thing that is
Out of hys kynde place, ywys,
Moveth thidder for to goo,
Yif hyt awey be therfro,
As I have before preved the,
Hyt seweth, every soune, parde,
Moveth kyndely to pace,
Al up into his kyndely place.
And this place of which I telle,
Ther as Fame lyst to dwelle,
Ys sette amyddys of these three,
Hevene, erthe, and eke the see,
As most conservatyf the soun.[1]
Than is this the conclusioun,
That every speche of every man,
As I the telle first began,
Moveth up on height to pace
Kyndely to Fames place.
'Telle me this now feythfully,
Have I not preved thus symply,
Withouten any subtilite
Of speche, or grete prolyxite
Of termes of philosophie,
Of figures of poetrie,
Or coloures of retorike?
Pardee, hyt oughte the to lyke;
For harde langage, and harde matere
Is encombrouse for to here
Attones; wost thou not wel this?'
And I answered and seyde, 'Yis.'

---

nature. *Stede*, meaning place, enters into the composition of many modern words; thus homestead, the place where the dwelling-house stands; roadstead, the place where ships ride; instead of, in place of.

[1] That is, 'As being best calculated to preserve the sound.'

'A ha!' quod he, 'lo, so I can,
Lewdely to a lewed[1] man
Speke, and shewe hym swyche skilles,
That he may shake hem be the billes.[2]
So palpable they sholden be.
But telle me this now preye I the,
How thenketh the my conclusyoun?'
'A goode persuasioun,'
Quod I, 'hyt is; and lyke to be,
Right so as thou hast preved me.'
'Be God,' quod he, 'and as I leve,
Thou shalt have yet, or it be eve,
Of every word of thys sentence,
A preve by experience;
And with thyn eres heren wel,
Toppe and tayle, and everidell,
That every word that spoken ys,
Cometh into Fames House, ywys,
As I have seyde; what wilt thou more?'
And with this word upper to sore,
He gan and seyde, 'Be seynt Jame,[3]
Now wil we speke al of game.
'How farest thou?' quod he to me.
'Wel,' quod I. 'Now see,' quod he,
'By thy trouthe, yonde adoune,
Wher that thou knowest any toune,
Or hous, or any other thinge.
And whan thou hast of ought knowynge,
Loke that thou werne me,
And I anoon shal telle the,
How fer that thou art now therfro.'
And I adoun to loken thoo,

---

[1] *Lewed* means unlearned, gross, from the Anglo-Saxon *leode*, the people.

[2] This is perhaps intended to be characteristic of the eagle. His reasons [skilles] are, he says, so familiar and palpable, that they may be shaken by the bills.

[3] St. James the Greater; a favourite oath, because of the celebrity of his relics, supposed to be preserved at Compostella.

And behelde feldes and playnes,
And now hilles, and now mountaynes,
Now valeys, and now forestes,
And now unnethes grete bestes;
Now ryveres, now citees,
Now tounes, and now grete trees,
Now shippes seyllynge in the see.
But thus sone in a while hee
Was flowen fro the grounde so hye,
That al the worlde, as to myn ye,
No more semed than a prikke;
Or elles was the eyre so thikke
That I ne myghte not discerne.
With that he spak to me as yerne,
And seyde: 'Seestow any token,
Or ought that in this world of spoken?'[1]
I seyde, 'Nay.' 'No wonder nys,'
Quod he, 'for halfe so high as this,
Nas Alexandre of Macedo
Ne the king, daun Cipio,[2]
That saw in dreme, at poynt devyse,[3]
Helle and erth, and paradys;
Ne eke the wrecche Didalus,
Ne his childe, nyse Ykarus,
That flegh so highe, that the hete
His wynges malte, and he fel wete
In myd the see, and ther he dreynt,
For whom was maked moche compleynt.
'Now turne upward,' quod he, 'thy face,
And beholde this large place,

[1] This sentence, as it stands, is unintelligible. We ought probably to read:—

'—— Seestow any tokenis,
Or ought that in this world of spoken is?'

[2] See vol. iv. p. 189, note 1.

[3] Skinner derives this expression from the French, à points divisés, which he explains, 'secundum puncta multo cum studio designata.' This supposed French phrase has all the appearance of being made for the nonce. *Poynt devys* would rather seem to be a corruption of the French *point de vice*, without fault. *At poynt devys* would then mean so exact as to be faultless.

This eyre; but loke thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalt se;
For in this regioun certeyne,
Dwelleth many a citezeyne,
Of which that speketh daun Plato.[1]
These ben eyrisshe bestes, lo!'
And so saugh I alle that meynee,
Boothe goone and also flee.
'Now,' quod he thoo, 'cast up thyne ye;
Se yonder, loo, the galaxie,
Whiche men clepeth the melky weye,
For hit ys white: and somme, parfeye,
Kallen hyt Watlynge strete,[2]
That ones was ybrente wyth hete,
Whan the sonnes sonne, the rede,
That highte Pheton,[3] wolde lede
Algate hys fader carte, and gye.
The carte hors gonne wel espye,

---

[1] This appears to be an allusion to Plato's Republic.

[2] The galaxy, or milky way, was, in the middle ages, very generally called Watlynge strete. In *The Compleynt of Scotland*, p. 90, it is said of the comet, 'it aperis oft in the quhyt circle, the quhilk the marinalis callis Vatlanstreit.' In the translation of the *Æneid*, by Gawain Douglas, it occurs again:—

> 'Of every sterne the twynkling notis he,
> That in the still hevin move cours we se,
> Arthurys house, and Hyades, betaikning rane,
> *Watlingestrete*, the Horne, and the Charlewane,
> The feirs Orion with his golden glave.'

This, however, was only an application of the word, not its proper and original meaning. The real Watling-street was a road which ran across England from east to west, and remains of which are still visible. It existed under the Britons as a forest-lane or trackway, was constructed as a solid road by the Romans, and from its magnificence was attributed, by succeeding generations, to supernatural, or at least heroic, agency. Florence of Worcester, who lived about the beginning of the twelfth century, supposes it to have derived its name from a race whom he calls the sons of King Wætla. 'Omnis populus qui habitabat in septentrionali plaga Weatlingastreatæ, id est strata quam filii Weatlæ regis ab orientali mari usque ad occidentale per Angliam straverunt.'—FLOR. WIG. *Chron.* sub an. 1013. —See *Essays on Subjects connected with Literature*, &c., by Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.

[3] See Ovid, *Met.* ii.

That he koude no governaunce,
And gonne for to lepe and taunce,
And beren hym now up, now doun,
Til that he sey the Scorpioun,
Whiche that in heven a sygne is yit.
And he for ferde lost hys wyt
Of that, and lat the reynes goon
Of his hors; and they anoon
Gonne up to mounten, and doun descende,
Till bothe the eyre and erthe brende;
Til Jupiter, loo, atte laste
Hym slewe, and fro the carte caste.
Lo, ys it not a mochil myschaunce,
To lat a foole han governaunce
Of thinges that he can not demeyne?'[1]
And with this word, sothe for to seyne,
He gan upper alwey to sore,
And gladded me ay more and more,
So feythfully to me spake he.
Tho gan I loken under me,
And behelde the eyerisshe bestes,
Cloudes, mystes, and tempestes,
Snowes, hayles, reynes, and wyndes,
And hir gendrynge in hir kyndes,
Alle the wey thorugh whiche I cam;
'O God,' quod I, 'that made Adam,
Moche is thy myghte and thy noblesse.'
And thoo thought I upon Boesse,
That writ of thoughte may flee so hye,
With fetheres of philosophye,
To passen everiche elemente;
And when he hath so fer ywente,
Than may be seen, behynde hys bak,
Cloude, and erthe, that I of spak.[2]

[1] *Demeyne* appears to be derived from the French, *mener*, to guide.

[2] The allusion is to the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius, lib. iv., met. i. 'Sunt enim pennæ volucres mihi,' &c. It is thus translated, or rather paraphrased, by Chaucer:—'When for thy swift fetheres that surmounten the heighte of the hevene, when the swifte thoughte hath clothed it in tho fetheres, it despiseth the hateful erthe, and surmounteth

Thoo gan I wexen in a were,
And seyde, 'I wote wel I am here;
But wher in body or in gost,
I not ywys, but God, thou wost!'
For more clere entendement,
Nas me never yit ysent.
And than thought I on Marcian,[1]
And eke of Anteclaudian,[2]
That sooth was her descripcion
Of alle hevenes region,
As fer as that I sey the preve;
Therefore I kan hem now beleve.
With that the egle began to crye,
'Lat be,' quod he, 'thy fantasye,
Wilt thou lerne of sterres aught?'
'Nay, certenly,' quod I, 'right naught.'
'And why? For I am now to olde.'
'Elles I wold the have tolde,'
Quod he, 'the sterres names, lo,
And all the hevenes sygnes to,
And which they ben.' 'No fors,' quod I.
'Yes, parde,' quod he, 'wostow why?
For whan thou redest poetrie,
How goddes gonne stellifye
Briddes, fisshe, beste, or hym, or here,
As the ravene or eyther bere[3]

---

the roundeness of the grete aire, and it seeth the cloudes behind his bakke, and passeth the height of the regioun of the fire that enchaufeth by the swifte movinge of the firmamente, til that he arises into the houses that bereth the sterres, and joyneth the weye with the sunne Phebus, and felawshippeth the way of the olde colde Saturnus, and is ymaked a knighte of the clere sterre. That is to seyne, when the thoughte is made Godes knighte, by the sekinge of clere trouthe to comen to the verrey knowleche of God.'

[1] The allusion is to the *De Nuptiis Philologiæ et Mercurii*, one section of which is on astronomy.

[2] The *Anticlaudianus* is a Latin poem by Alanus de Insulis, a poet and divine of the twelfth century.—See FABRICIUS, *Bib. Med. Ætat.* His poem, *De Planctu Naturæ*, has been already alluded to in *The Assembly of Foules*.—See vol. iv. p. 202.

[3] The constellations known as Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.

Or Ariones harpe fyne,
Castor, Polexe, or Delphyne,
Or Athalantes doughtres sevene,[1]
How alle these arne set in hevene;
For though thou have hem ofte on honde,
Yet nostow not wher that they stonde.'
'No fors,' quod I, 'hyt is no nede,
I leve as wele, so God me spede,
Hem that write of this matere,
Alle though I knew her places here;
And eke they semen[2] here so bryghte,
Hyt sholde shenden al my syghte,
To loke on hem.' 'That may wel be,'
Quod he. And so forthe bar he me
A while, and than he gan to crye,
That never herd I thing so hye,
'Now up the hede, for alle is wele;[3]
Seynt Julyane,[4] loo, bon hostele!
Se here the House of Fame, lo!
Mastow not heren that I do?'
'What?' quod I. 'The grete soune,'
Quod he, 'that rumbleth up and doune
In Fames House, ful of tydynges,
Bothe of feyre speche and chidynges,
And of fals and soth compouned;
Herkeneth wel; hyt is not rouned.
'Herestow not the grete swough?'
'Yis, perde,' quod I, 'wel ynough.'
'And what soune is it lyke?' quod hee.
'Peter!' betynge of the see,'

[1] These are all constellations.

[2] The MS. reads *thy selven*, which makes no sense. *They semen* has therefore been adopted from Speght.

[3] St. Julian was the patron saint of hospitality; the eagle therefore calls out his name when he sees the House of Fame, in thanksgiving, for having been brought to so splendid an hostel, or lodging.—See vol. i. p. 92, note 2.

[4] Among Warton's arguments in favour of his supposition, that this poem is a translation from the *Provençal*, is one founded on the use of this word *Peter*. He observes in a note:—'In one place he (Chaucer)

Quod I, 'ageyn the roches holowe,
Whan tempeste doth the shippes swolowe,
And lat a man stonde, oute of doute,
A myle thens, and here hyt route.
Or elles lyke the last humblynge
After the clappe of oo thundringe,
When Joves hath the eyre ybete[1]
But it doth me for feare swete.[2]
'Nay, drede the not therof,' quod he,
Hyt is nothinge wille biten the,
Thou shalt non harme have truly.'
And with that word both he and I
As nigh the place arryved were,
As men myght casten with a spere.
I nyste how, but in a strete
He sette me faire on my fete,
And seyde, 'Walke forth a pace,
And take thyn aventure or case,
That thou shalt fynde in Fames place.'
'Now,' quod I, 'while we han space
To speke, or that I goo fro the,
For the love of God, telle me,
In soothe, that wil I of the lere,
Yf this noyse that I here
Be, as I have herde the tellen,
Of folke that doune in erthe dwellen,

---

is addressed by the name of Geffray. B. ii. v. 221. But in two others by that of Peter. B. ii. v. 526. B. iii. v. 144.'—*Hist. Eng. Poet.* sect. xiv. Therefore, he would conclude, Chaucer had adapted the original poem to his own case in one instance, and had neglected to alter it in two others. It is amazing that a man of Warton's reading in mediæval poetry should not have perceived that *Peter!* is here an exclamation, or oath, meaning by St. Peter; like Marry! meaning by St. Mary.

[1] The whole idea of Fame and her palace is evidently derived from Ovid, *Met.* xii., and Virgil, *Æneid.* iv. But this passage is almost a literal translation of the former:—

'Nec tamen est clamor, sed parvæ murmura vocis:
Qualia de pelagi, si quis procul audiat, undis
Esse solent: qualemve sonum, cum Jupiter atras
Increpuit nubes, extrema tonitrua reddunt.'—*Met.* xii. 49.

And commeth here in the same wyse,
As I the herde, or this, devyse?
And that there lives body nys
In al that hous that yonder ys,
That maketh al this loude fare?'
'Noo,' quod he, 'by seynte Clare!
And al so wis God rede me,
But o thinge I wil werne the,
Of the whiche thou wolt have wonder.
Loo, to the House of Fame yonder,
Thou wost how commeth every speche,
Hyt nedeth noght efte the to teche.
But understonde now ryght wel this,
Whan any speche ycomen ys
Up to the paleys, anone ryghte
Hyt wexith lyke the same wighte,
Which that the worde in erthe spak,
Be hyt clothed rede or blak;
And so were hys lykenesse,
And spake the worde,[1] that thou wilt gesse
That it the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.
And ys not this a wonder thinge?'
'Yis,' quod I tho, 'by heven kynge!'
And with this worde, 'Farewel,' quod he,
'And here I wol abyden the,
And God of hevene sende the grace,
Some goode to lerne in this place.'
And I of him toke leve anone,
And gan forth to the paleys gone.

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS.

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[1] That is, 'And so wore [were] his appearance, and so spake the word, that you would imagine him or her the same person who said it on earth.'—This idea is not to be found in the classical writers.

LIBER TERTIUS.

O God of science and of lyghte,
Apollo, thurgh thy grete myghte,
This lytel last boke thou gye!
Nat that I wilne for maistrye
Here art poetical be shewed.
But, for the ryme ys lyght and lewed,
Yit make hyt sumwhat agreable,
Though somme vers fayle in a sillable;[1]
And that I do no diligence,
To shewe crafte, but o sentence.
And yif devyne vertu thou,
Wilt helpe me to shewe nowe,
That in myn hede ymarked ys,
(Loo, that is for to menen this,
The House of Fame for to descryve)
Thou shalt se me go as blyve
Unto the next laurer I see,
And kysse hyt, for hyt is thy tree.
Now entreth in my brest anoon.
Whan I was fro thys egle goon,
I gan beholde upon this place.
And certeine, or I ferther pace,
I wol yow al the shape devyse
Of hous and citee; and al the wyse
How I gan to thys place approche,
That stood upon so hygh a roche,
Hyer stant there none in Spayne.
But up I clombe with alle payne,
And though to clymbe greved mee,
Yit I ententyf was to see,

[1] This passage is in itself sufficient to establish the fact, that Chaucer understood and aimed at a certain amount of syllabic regularity in his verse, at least so far as this, that he considered a deficiency in a syllable a blemish. It does not, however, show that he conceived a redundant syllable to be a fault.—See General Introduction, vol. i. p. 51.

And for to powren wondre lowe,
Yf I koude eny weyes know
What maner stoon this roche was,
For hyt was lyke a thynge of glas,[1]
But that hyt shoon ful more clere;
But of what congeled matere
Hyt was, nyste I redely.
But at the laste espied I,
And founde that hit was everydele,
A roche of yse, and not of stele.
Thought I, 'By seynt Thomas of Kent,[2]
This were a feble fundament,
To bilden on a place hye;
He ought him lytel glorifye
That heron bilte, God so me save!'[3]
Tho saugh I the halfe[4] ygrave
With famouse folkes names fele,
That had yben in mochel wele,
And her fames wide yblowe.
But well unnethes koude I knowe
Any lettres for to rede
Hir names be; for, out of drede,
They weren almost of thowed so,
That of the lettres oon or two
Were molte away of every name,
So unfamouse was wox hir fame;
But men seyn, 'what may ever laste?'
Thoo gan I in myn herte caste,

---

[1] The printed editions read *limed glass*, and Tyrwhitt explains limed to mean polished with a file. But filed glass would not shine at all. Perhaps *limed* might have been a misprint for *limned*, painted. The reading of the MS., however, is better than either.

[2] Thomas à Becket, whose shrine at Canterbury was the resort of vast multitudes of pilgrims.—See ERASMI *Col. Peregrinatio religionis ergo.*

[3] This is one of many instances of Chaucer's familiarity with the details of architecture.—See *ante*, p. 198, note 1.

[4] The printed editions read *halle*; but no hall has yet been spoken of. *Halfe* means the half of the hill which was towards the poet as he was ascending. The other half is afterwards spoken of.

That they were molte awey with hete,[1]
And not awey with stormes bete.
For on the other syde I sey
Of this hille, that northwerde ley,
How hit was writen ful of names,
Of folkes that hadden grete fames
Of olde tymes, and yet they were
As fressh as men hadde writen hem here
The selfe-day, ryght or that houre
That I upon hem gan to poure.
But well I wiste what yt made;
Hyt was conserved with the shade,
Alle this wrytynge that I sigh,
Of a castel stoode on high;
And stoode eke on so colde a place,
That hete myght hyt not deface.
Thoo gan I on this hille to goone,
And fonde upon the coppe a woone,
That alle the men that ben on lyve
Ne han the kunnynge to descrive
The beaute of that ylke place,
Ne coude casten no compace
Swich another for to make,
That myghte of beaute be hys make;
Ne so wonderlyche ywroughte,
That hyt astonyeth yit my thoughte,
And maketh alle my wytte to swynke
On this castel to bethynke.
So that the grete beautie
The[2] caste, the curiositye,
Ne kan I not to yow devyse,
My witte ne may me not suffise.

[1] It is not easy to determine the allegorical meaning of the heat by which the names were melted away. Perhaps it may signify that works written in the heat of party-spirit are not made for immortality. Or heat may mean haste.

[2] The Fairfax MS. reads *to*, which makes the sentence very involved. The Bodleian, which is a copy of the former, alters it to *the*, which is probably correct. The *caste* means the forecast, contrivance.

But natheles alle the substaunce
I have yit in my remembraunce;
For why? Me thoughte, by saint Gyle,[1]
Alle was of stone of beryle,
Both the castel and the toure,
And eke the halle, and every boure,
Wythouten peces or joynynges.
But many subtile compassinges,
As rabewyures[2] and pynnacles,
Ymageries and tabernacles,
I say; and ful eke of wyndowes,
As flakes falles in grete snowes.
And eke in eche of the pynnacles
Weren sundry habitacles,[3]
In whiche stooden, alle withoute,
Ful the castel alle aboute,
Of al maner of mynstralles,
And gestiours, that tellen tales
Both of wepinge and of game,
Of alle that longeth unto Fame.
There herd I pleyen upon an harpe,
That souneth bothe wel and sharpe,
Orpheus ful craftely,
And on the syde faste by
Sat the harper Orion,[4]
And Eacydes Chiron.[5]

---

[1] See vol. iii. p. 46, note 1.

[2] Speght reads *babeuries*, which he explains antiquets; Urry reads *barbican*, probably because he did not understand *babeuries*. The Fairfax MS. reads *rabewyures*, which is just as likely to be a genuine word as *babeuries*, though it is not to be found in the glossaries.

[3] The general plan of the temple is that of a church of Chaucer's time; but minstrels and gestours take the place of the saints, whose statues may still be seen in crocketted niches on the buttresses and pinnacles of our cathedral.

[4] Arion, the poet and harper, whose adventures form the subject of one of Lucian's most lively satires.

[5] The Centaur Chiron, who instructed Peleus, Achilles, and others of the family of Æacus, in music and other accomplishments. This is an example of a curious mode of distinguishing persons from others of the same name by adding the name of some distinguished friend. Thus

And other harpers many oon,
And the gret Glascurion.
And smale harpers with her glees,
Saten under hym in sees;
And gonne on hym upwarde to gape,
And countrefet hym as an ape,
Or as crafte countrefeteth kynde.[1]
Tho saugh I stonden hym behynde,
A fer fro hem, alle be hemselve,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden lowde menstralcies
In cornemuse and shalmyes,[2]
And many other maner pipe,
That craftely begunne to pipe,
Bothe in doucet and in riede,[3]
That ben at festes with the bride.

---

the celebrated Oliver is called *Charles* Oliver, to show that the paladin of Charlemagne is the person intended—See vol. iii. p. 200, note 3. Here Chiron is called Eacydes, or the Chiron who was the friend of the Æacides, Peleus, Achilles, &c. Thus the ecclesiastical historian is called Eusebius *Pamphili*, or Eusebius the friend of Pamphilus, to distinguish him from others of the same name.

[1] Chaucer had a high opinion of the merits of Glascurion, who, he says, excels his imitators as much as nature (kynde) does art (crafte). This is probably the same person as that Glasgerion celebrated in the ballad which goes by his name in Percy's *Reliques*:—

'Glasgerion was a Kinges owne son,
And a harper he was goode;
He harped in the Kinges chambere
Where cuppe and candle stoode.'

[2] Urry and Tyrwhitt interpret this to be the *shawm*, an instrument mentioned in the translation of Psalm xcviii. in the Book of Common Prayer, or the psaltery, an instrument like the harp, in the shape of a Δ.—See vol. iv. p. 249, note 2.

[3] The *doucet* appears from the context to have been a sort of pipe. It is mentioned in a poem of Lydgate's in MS. Fairfax 16:—

'There were trumpes and trumpettes
Lowde shallys (shalmys?) and doucettes.'

It seems to be derived from the French word *douce*, sweet, and was probably the same as the dulcimer in the English translation of Daniel iii. 5, 'That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, *dulcimer*,' &c. It is distinguished here from the *rede*, an instrument in which the sound was produced by the vibration of a reed, as in the clarionet or hautboys.

And many flowte[1] and liltyng horne,
And pipes made of grene corne,
As han thise lytel herde gromes,
That kepen bestis in the bromes.
Ther saugh I than Atileris,
And of Athenes daun Pseustis,[2]
And Marcia[3] that lost her skynne,
Bothe in face, body, and chynne,
For that she wolde envien, loo,
To pipen bet than Apollo.
There saugh I famous, olde and yonge,
Pipers of alle Dutche tonge,[4]
To lerne love-daunces, sprynges,
Reues, and these straunge thynges.
Tho saugh I in another place,
Stonden in a large space
Of hem that maken blody soun,
In trumpe, beme, and claryoun;
For in feghte and blodeshedynges
Ys used gladly clarionynges.
Ther herd I trumpen, Messenus,[5]
Of whom that speketh Vergilius.
Ther herd I trumpe Joab also,
Theodomas,[6] and othere mo,

[1] *Flowte* is evidently the flute.

[2] In the printed editions *Atileris* and *Pseustis* are *Citherus* and *Proserus*, names which defy all conjecture. *Atileris* may possibly be the freed-man Atilius, who exhibited games at Fidenæ, in the amphitheatre, which fell during the performance and killed great multitudes. —See TACIT. *Annales*. iv. *Pseustis* in Greek means a female liar; but who the particular person alluded to is can now hardly be determined. Any one who is at all conversant with MSS. will be slow to attribute these, and such like mistakes in the orthography of proper names, to the author.

[3] Marcia is Marsyas, here transformed into a woman, probably by the ignorant copyist. He was a celebrated flute-player of Celenæ, in Phrygia, and being defeated in a trial of skill by Apollo, was, according to the previous agreement, flayed alive.

[4] The Germans were early celebrated for their love of poetry and song.—See TACITUS, *Germania*.

[5] Misenus is the trumpeter of Hector and Æneas.—*Æneid*, ii. 239.

[6] See vol. ii. p. 177, note 1.

And alle that used clarion,
In Cataloigne and Aragon,[1]
That in her tymes famous were
To lerne, saugh I trumpe there.
Ther saugh I sit in other sees,
Pleyinge upon sondry glees,
Which that I kannot nevene,
Moo than sterres ben in hevene,
Of whiche I nyl not now ryme,
For ese of yow, and losse of tyme:
For tyme ylost, this knowen ye,
Be no way may recovered be.
There saugh I pleyen jugelours,
Magiciens, and tregetours,[2]
And phitonisses,[3] charmeresses,
Olde witches, sorceresses,
That use exorsisaciouns,
And eke thes fumygaciouns;
And clerkes eke, which konne wel
Alle this magike naturel,
That craftely doon her ententes,
To maken, in certeyn ascendentes,
Ymages, lo, thurgh which magike,
To make a man ben hool or syke.
Ther saugh I the quene Medea,[4]
And Circes eke, and Calipsa.[5]

---

[1] This is one of the passages upon which Warton founds his opinion that this poem is a translation from the French. He says, 'To the trumpeters of renown, the poet adds—

'—— all that used clarion
In Casteloigne or Arragon.'

Casteloigne is Catalonia, in Spain. The martial musicians of English tournaments, so celebrated in story, were a more natural and obvious allusion for an English poet.'—*Hist. Eng. Poet.*, sect. xiv.

[2] See vol. ii. p. 239, note 4.

[3] See vol. ii. p. 97, note 2.

[4] Medea, the daughter of Æetes, and wife of Jason, whose father, Æson, she restored to youth by her magical art.

[5] The Fairfax MS. reads *Artes*, but the printed editions *Circes*. Circe is, of course, the person intended. Calypsa is Calypso.

Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,[1]
Lymeote, and eke Symon Magus.[2]
Ther saugh I, and knew by name,
That by such art done men have fame.
Ther saugh I Colle Tregetour[3]
Upon a table of sygamour
Pleye an uncouthe thynge to telle;
I saugh hym carien a wynd-melle
Under a wal-note shale.
What shold I make lenger tale,
Of alle the pepil I ther say,
Fro hennes into domesday?
Whan I had al this folkys beholde,
And fonde me louse and noght yholde,
And eft I mused longe while
Upon these walles of berile,
That shoone ful lyghter than a glas,
And made wel more than hit was,
To semen every thynge, ywis,
As kynde thynge of Fames is;
I gan forth romen til I fonde
The castel yate on my ryght honde,
Whiche that so wel corven was,
That never suche another nas;
And yit it was be aventure
Ywrought, as often as be cure.[4]
Hyt nedeth noght yow more to tellen,
To make yow to longe dwellen,
Of these yates florishinges,
Ne of compasses, ne of kervynges,
Ne how they hat in masoneries,
As corbetz, ful of imageries.

---

[1] This is probably Hermes Trismegistus.—See vol. iii. p. 31, note 2.

[2] Acts viii. 9. Who this Limeote, or Limote (for so the printed editions spell the name) was, none of the commentators have been able to discover.

[3] This Colle Tregetour seems to have been some celebrated juggler, of whom nothing is now known.

[4] It was as often done by luck as by skill.

But, Lord! so faire yt was to shewe,
For hit was alle with golde behewe.
But in I went, and that anoon;
Ther mette I cryinge many oon,
'A larges, larges![1] hald up wel!
God save the lady of this pel,
Our oune gentil lady Fame,
And hem that wilnen to have name
Of us!' Thus herd I crien alle,
And fast comen out of halle,
And shoon nobles and sterlynges.
And some crownes were as kynges,
With crounes wroughte ful of losynges;[2]
And many rybans, and many frenges
Were on her clothes trewely.
Tho atte last aspyed I
That pursevauntes and heraudes,
That crien ryche folkes laudes,
Hyt weren; alle and every man
Of hem, as I yow tellen can,
Had on him throwen a vesture,
Whiche that men clepen a cote armure,[3]
Enbrowded wonderlyche ryche,
As though ther nere nought yliche.
But nought wyl I, so mote I thryve,
Ben aboute to descryve

---

[1] 'This was the cry with which heralds and pursuivants were wont to acknowledge the bounty received from the knights. The heralds, like the minstrels, were a race allowed to have great claims upon the liberality of the knights, of whose feats they kept a record, and proclaimed them aloud upon particular occasions.'—*Marmion*, canto i., note.

It is the custom for the labourers in Norfolk and Suffolk, after harvest, to gather money at the gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood, and to levy contributions on casual passers, for the purpose of providing a harvest supper. On receiving a gratuity they take hands in a circle, and 'halloa largess,' as it is called.

[2] These were the kings-at-arms, who wore crowns wrought with the heraldic figures called lozenges.

[3] The cote-armure was the herald's Tabard, whence the inn at which the pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* lodged, derived its name. See vol. i. p. 76, note 1.

Alle these armes that ther weren,
That they thus on her cotes beren,
For hyt to me were impossible;
Men myghte make of hem a bible,
Twenty foote thykke I trowe.
For certeyn who so koude knowe
Myght ther alle the armes seen,
Of famouse folke that han ybeen
In Auffrike, Europe, and Asye,
Syth first began the chevalrie.
Loo! how sholde I now telle al thys?
Ne of the halle eke what neede is,
To tellen yow that every wall
Of hit, and flore, and roofe, and alle,
Was plated half a foote thikke
Of golde, and that nas no thynge wykke,
But, for to prove in alle wyse,
As fyne as ducat in Venyse,[1]
Of whiche to litel al in my pouche is?
And they wer set as thik of nouchis
Fyne, of the fynest stones faire,
That men reden in the Lapidaire,[2]
As grasses[3] growen in a mede.
But hit were alle to longe to rede
The names; and therfore I pace.
But in this lusty and ryche place,
That Fames halle called was,
Ful moche prees of folke there nas,
Ne crowding, for to mochel prees.
But al on hye, above a dees,
Sit in a see imperialle,
That made was of rubee alle,

---

[1] This is one of the passages from which Warton infers the continental origin of this poem.

[2] This is a treatise on precious stones, and is probably a translation from the Latin poem *de gemmis* of Marbodus, often quoted by the name of *Lapidarius*.—*Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt.*

[3] The Fairfax MS. reads *of grees*, which appears to be a mere clerical error.

Which that a carbuncle ys ycalled,
I saugh perpetually ystalled,
A femynyne creature;
That never formed by nature
Was suche another thing yseye.
For alderfirste, soth for to seye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte,
That the lengthe of a cubite,
Was lengere than she seemed be;
This was gret marvaylle to me,[1]
Hir self tho wonderly streighte,
That with hir fete she erthe reighte,
And with hir hed she touched hevene,
Ther as shynen sterres sevene.[2]
And therto eke, as to my witte,
I saugh a greter wonder yitte,
Upon her eyen to beholde,
But certeynly I hem never tolde.
For as feele yen had she,
As fetheres upon foules be,
Or weren on the bestes foure,
That Goddes trone gunne honoure,
As Johan writ in thapocalips.[3]
Her heere that oundye was and crips,
As burned gold hyt shoon to see.
And sothe to tellen also shee
Had al so fele up stondyng eres
And tonges, as on bestes heres;
And on hir fete wexen saugh I
Partriches winges redely.[4]

[1] The printed editions read 'But thus soone in a while she,' which is perhaps better.

[2] The planets.

[3] 'And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [rather living creatures or animals] full of eyes before and behind.'—Rev. iv. 6.

[4] Her feet are furnished with partridge wings to denote swiftness, as the partridge is remarkable for running with great celerity with outspread wings. This description is taken almost literally from the description of Fame in the *Æneid*, except the allusion to the Apocalypse and the partridge wings.

But, Lorde! the perrye and the richesse
I saugh sittyng on this godesse!
And, Lorde! the hevenyssh melodye,
Of songes fulle of armonye,
I herd aboute her trone ysonge,
That al the paleys walles ronge!
(So songe the myghty Muse, she
That cleped ys Caliope,
And hir eighte sustrer eke,
That in her face semen meke)
And evermo eternally,
They synge of Fame as tho herd I,
'Heryed be thou and thy name,
Goddesse of renoun or Fame.'
Tho was I war, loo, atte laste,
As I myn eyen gan up caste,
That thys ilke noble quene
On her sholders gan sustene
Bothe armes, and the name
Of thoo that hadde large fame;
Alexander, and Hercules,
That with a sherte hys lyfe les![1]
And thus fonde I syttynge this goddes,
In noble honour and ryches;
Of which I stynte a while nowe,
Other thinge to tellen yowe.
Tho saugh I stonde on eyther syde,
Streight doun to the dores wide,
Fro the dees many a pelere
Of metal, that shoon not ful clere,
But though they ner of no rychesse,
Yet they were made for gret noblesse,
And in hem grete sentence.
And folkes of digne reverence,
Of whiche I wil yow telle fonde,
Upon the piler saugh I stonde.

[1] The allusion is to the poisoned shirt of Nessus sent by Dejanira to Hercules, who put it on, and died from the effects.

Alderfirste loo ther I sighe,
Upon a piler stonde on highe,
That was of lede and yren fyne,
Hym of secte Saturnyne,[1]
The Ebrayke Josephus the olde,
That of Jewes gestes tolde;
And he bare on hys shulderes hye,
The fame up of the Jurye.
And by hym stonden other sevene,
Wise and worthy for to nevene,
To helpen him bere up the charge,
Hyt was so hevy and so large.
And for they writen of batayles,
As wel as other olde mervayles,
Therfor was, loo, thys pilere,
Of whiche that I yow telle here,
Of lede and yren bothe ywys.
For yren Martes metal ys,
Which that God is of batayle.
And the lede withouten faille,
Is, loo, the metal of Saturne,
That hath a ful large whele to turne.[2]
Thoo stonden forthe on every rowe
Of hem, which I koude knowe,
Though I hem nought be ordre telle,
To make yow to longe to dwelle.
These, of whiche I gynne rede,
There saugh I stonde, out of drede,
Upon an yren piler stronge,
That peynted was, al endelonge,
With tigres blode in every place,
The Tholason that highte Stace,[3]

[1] Called of the sect of Saturn, because relating the frightful famine, pestilences, and slaughters, which the Jews endured during the siege of Jerusalem, and over which Saturn presided.—See vol. i. p. 168.

[2] Whose orbit is larger than that of any other planet.

[3] Publius Papirius Statius, author of the *Thebais* and *Achilleis*, called Tholasen, because by some supposed, incorrectly, to have been a native of Tolosa, or Toulouse. 'Qui vero Tolasanum existimârunt, inter quos

That bare of Thebes up the fame
Upon his shuldres, and the name
Also of cruelle Achilles.[1]
And by him stoode, withouten lees,
Full wonder hye on a pilere
Of yren, he, the gret Omere;
And with him Dares[2] and Tytus[3]
Before, and eke he Lollius,[4]
And Guydo eke de Columpnis,[5]
And Englyssh Gaunfride[6] eke, ywys.
And eche of these, as have I joye,
Was besye for to bere up Troye.
So hevy therof was the fame,
That for to bere hyt was no game.
But yet I gan ful wel espie,
Betwex hem was a litil envye.
Oon seyde that Omere made lyes,[7]
Feynynge in hys poetries,
And was to Grekes favourable;
Therfor held he hyt but fable.
Tho saugh I stonde on a pilere,
That was of tynned yren clere,[8]
That Latyn poete Virgile,
That bore hath up a longe while

Danthes fuit, poeta Hetruscorum vernaculus, decepti sunt alterius Statii rhetoris patriâ, cujus meminit Eusebius'—*Vita*, ex LILIO GREGORIO GYRALDO. Chaucer probably derived this mistake from Dante:—

'Tanto fu dolce mio vocale spirto
Che Tolosano a sè mi trasse Roma,
Dove mertai le tempie ornar di mirto.'—*Purg.* xxi.

[1] His other great work, which he left incomplete, is the *Achilleis*.

[2] See vol. v. p. 22, note 3.

[3] Tytus is evidently a mistake for Dytis or Dictys, called Cretensis.—See vol. v. p. 22, note 4.

[4] See vol. v. p. 10.

[5] See vol. v. p. 9, note 2.

[6] Geoffrey of Monmouth, who derives the origin of the Britons from the Trojan fugitives.

[7] The Fairfax MS. reads this line, 'Oon seyde Omere was lies.' The reading of the printed editions has been adopted as being much better.

[8] Homer's iron is here admirably represented as having been by Virgil covered over with tin.

The fame of pius Eneas.
And next hym on a piler was
Of copper,[1] Venus' clerke, Ovide,
That hath ysowen wonder wide
The grete god of loves name.
And ther he bar up wel hys fame,
Upon this piler al so hye,
As I hyt myght see with myn ye:
For why? this halle of whiche I rede,
Was woxen on hight, the length, and brede,
Well more be a thousande dele,
Than hyt was erst, that saugh I wele.
Thoo saugh I on a piler by,
Of yren wrought full sternely,
The grete poet, daun Lucan,
That on hys shulders bare up than,
As high as that I mighte see,
The fame of Julius, and Pompee.[2]
And by him stoden alle these clerkes,
That writen of Romes myghty werkes,
That yif I wolde her names telle,
Alle to longe most I dwelle.
And next him on a piler stoode
Of soulfre, lyke as he were woode,
Daun Claudian,[3] the sothe to telle,
That bare up the fame of hell,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne,
That quene ys of the derke pyne.
What sholde I more telle of this?
The halle was alle ful, ywis,
Of hem that writen olde gestes,
As ben on trees rokes nestes;

---

[1] Ovid, as being an amatory poet, is represented standing on a pillar of copper, a metal sacred to Venus.

[2] The allusion is to Lucan's *Pharsalia*, a poem on the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, ended by the defeat of the latter at Pharsalia, in Thessaly.

[3] See vol. ii. p. 193, note 2.

But hit a ful confuse matere
Were alle the gestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they highte.
But while that I behelde thys syght,
I herd a noyse aprochen blyve,
That ferd as been done in an hive,
Ayen her tyme of oute fleyynge;
Ryghte suche a maner murmurynge,
For al the world hyt semed me.
Tho gan I loke aboute and see,
That ther come entryng into the halle,
A ryght grete companye withalle,
And that of sondry regiouns,
Of alle skynnes condiciouns,[1]
That dwelle in erthe under the mone,
Pore and ryche. And al so sone
As they were come into the halle,
They gonne doune on knees falle,
Before this ilke noble quene,
And seyde, 'Graunte us, lady shene,
Eche of us of thy grace a bone!'
And somme of hem she graunted sone,
And somme she werned wel and faire;
And somme she graunted the contraire
Of her axyng outterly.
But this I sey yow trewely,
What her cause was, I nyste.
For of this folke ful wel I wiste,
They hadde goode fame eche deserved,
Although they were diversly served.
Ryght as her suster, dame Fortune,
Is wonte to serven in commune.
Now herke how she gan to paye
That gonne of her grace praye,

---

[1] The printed editions read *kynd of*, but the reading in the text is probably correct. The meaning is, 'A great company of all conditions of skin,' *i. e.* of all complexions, or races.

And right lo, al this companye
Seyden sooth, and noght a lye.
'Madame,' quod they, 'we be
Folke that here besechen the,
That thou graunte us now good fame,
And let our werkes han that name.
In ful recompensacioun
Of goode werke, yive us good renoun.'
'I werne yow,' quod she, 'anoon,
Ye gete of me good fame noon,
Be God! and therfore goo your wey.'
'Allas,' quod they, 'and welaway!
Telle us what may your cause be.'
'For us lyst hyt noght,' quod she,[1]
'No wyghte shal speke of yow, ywis,
Good ne harme, ne that ne this.'
And with that worde she gan to calle
Her messangere that was in halle,
And bad that he shuld faste goon,
Upon peyne to be blynde anone,
For Eolus the god of winde,
'In Trace there ye shall him finde,[2]
And byd hym brynge his clarioun,
That is full dyvers of his soun,
And hyt is cleped Clere Laude,
With which he wonte is to hiraude
Hem that me list ypreised be:
And also bid him how that he
Brynge his other clarioun,
That highte Sclaundre in every toun,
With whiche he wonte is to diffame
Hem that me liste, and do him shame.

[1] That is, 'Because it is not pleasing to us.' Us is the dative case. Fame, as being a sovereign, speaks of herself in the plural number.

[2] This line is omitted in the MSS. The passage stands thus:—

'And bad that he shulde faste goon,
Upon the peyne to be blynde,
For Eolus, the god of wynde
And bid him,' &c.

This messenger gan faste goon,
And found where in a cave of stoon,
In a contree highte Trace,
This Eolus, with harde grace,
Helde the wyndes in distresse,
And gan hem under him to presse,
That they gonne as beres rore,
He bonde and pressed hem so sore.[1]
This messanger gan faste crie,
'Ryse up,' quod he, 'and faste hye,
Til thou at my lady be;
And take thy clariouns eke with the,
And spede the forther.' And he anon,
Toke to a man that hight Tritone,
His clariouns to beren thoo,
And lete a certeyn wynde to goo,
And blewe so hydously and hye,
That hyt ne lefte not a skye
In alle the welkene longe and brode.
This Eolus no where abode,
Til he was come to Fames fete,
And eke the man that Triton hete;
And ther he stode as stille as stoon.
And herwithal ther came anoon
Another huge companye
Of goode folke and gunne crie,
'Lady graunte us goode fame
And lat oure werkes han that name,
Now in honour of gentilesse,
And al so God your soule blesse!
For we han wel deserved hyt,
Therfore is ryght that we ben wel quyt.'
'As thryve I,' quod she, 'ye shal faylle,
Good werkes shall yow noght availle,
To have of me good fame as now.
But wete ye what? I graunte yow,

[1] Imitated from Virgil, *Æneid*, I. 52.

That ye shal have a shrewde fame,
And wikkyd loos and wors name,
Though ye good loos have wel deserved.
Now goo your wey for ye be served;
Have doon! Eolus, let see!
Take forth thy trumpe anoon,' quod she;
'That is ycleped Sclaunder lyght,
And blow her loos, that every wight
Speke of hem harme and shrewdenesse,
In stede of good and worthynesse.
For thou shalt trumpe alle the contrayre,
Of that they han don wel or fayre.'
Allas, thought I, what aventures
Han these sory creatures,
For they amonges al the pres,
Shuld thus be shamed gilteles!
But what? hyt moste nedes be.
What did this Eolus, but he
Toke out hys blake trumpe of bras,
That fouler than the Devel was,
And gan this trumpe for to blowe,
As al the worlde shuld overthrowe.
Throughoute every regioun,
Went this foule trumpes soun,
As swifte as pelet out of gonne,
Whan fire is in the poudre ronne.[1]
And suche a smoke gan oute wende,
Oute of his foule trumpes ende,
Blak, bloo, grenysshe, swarte, rede,
As dothe where that men melte lede,
Loo, alle on high fro the tuelle.
And therto oo thing saugh I welle,
That the ferther that hit ran,
The gretter wexen hit began,

[1] It appears from this passage that the use of gunnery was well known in Chaucer's time; but the bow maintained its place even till the seventeenth century.

As dooth the ryver from a welle,
And hyt stank as the pitte of helle.
Allas, thus was her shame yronge,
And giltelesse on every tonge.
Tho come the thridde companye,
And gunne up to the dees to hye,
And doun on knees they fille anoon,
And seyde, 'We ben everychoon
Folke that han ful truely
Deserved fame ryghtfully,
And preye yow hit mote be knowe,
Ryght as hit is, and forthy blowe.'
'I graunte,' quod she, 'for me leste
That now your goode werkes be wiste;
And yet ye shul han better loos,
In dispite of alle your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anoon:
Late now,' quod she, 'thy trumpe goon,
Thou Eolus, that is so blake;
And out thyn other trumpe take
That highte Laude, and blowe yt soo
That thorugh the worlde her fame goo,
Esely and not to faste,
That hyt be knowen atte laste.'
'Ful gladly, lady myn,' he seyde;
And oute hys trumpe of golde he brayde
Anoon, and set hyt to his mouthe,
And blewe it est, and west, and southe,
And northe, as lowde as any thunder,
That every wighte hath of hit wonder,
So brode hyt ran or than hit stynt.
And, certes, al the breth that went
Oute of his trumpes mouthe smelde,
As men a potte ful of bawme helde
Amonge a basket ful of roses;
This favour did he til her loses.
And ryghte with this I gan aspye,
Ther come the ferthe companye,

(But certeyne they were wonder fewe)
And gunne to stonden in a rewe,
And seyden, 'Certes, lady bryghte,
We han done wel with al our mighte,
But we ne kepen have no fame.
Hide our werkes and our name,
For Goddys love! for certes we
Han certeyn doon hyt for bounte,
And for no maner other thinge.'
'I graunte you alle your askynge,'
Quod she; 'let your werkes be dede.'
With that aboute I clywe myn hede,
And saugh anoon the fifte route
That to this lady gunne loute,
And doun on knees anoon to falle;
And to hir thoo besoughten alle,
To hiden her goode werkes eke,
And seyden, they yeven noght a leke
For no fame, ne suche renoun;
For they for contemplacioun,
And Goddes love, hadde ywroughte,
Ne of fame wolde they noughte.
'What?' quod she, 'and be ye woode?
And wene ye for to doo goode,
And for to have of that no fame?
Have ye dispite to have my name?
Nay, ye shull lyen everychoon!
Blow thy trumpes and that anoon,'
Quod she, 'thou, Eolus yhote,
And rynge this folkes werkes be note,
And alle the worlde may of hyt here.'
And he gan blowe hir loos so clere,
In his golden clarioun,
That thorugh the worlde went the soun,
Al so kenely, and eke so softe,
But atte last hyt was on lofte.
Tho come the sexte companye,
And gunne fast on Fame crie.

Ryght verraly in this manere
They seyden:—'Mercy, lady deere!
To telle certeyn as hyt is,
We han don neither that ne this,
But ydel al oure lyfe ybe.
But, natheles, yet preye we,
That we mowe han as goode fame,
And gret renoum and knowen name,
As they that han doon noble gestes,
And acheved alle her lestes,
As wel of love as other thynge;
Alle was us never broche ne rynge,
Ne elles nought from wymmen sent;
Ne ones in her herte yment,
To maken us oonly frendly chere,
But mighten temen us upon bere,
Yet lat us to peple seeme
Suche as the worlde may of us deme,
That wommen loven us for wode.
Hyt shal doon us as moche goode,
And to oure herte as moche avaylle,
The countrepese, ese, and travaylle,
As we had wonne hyt with labour;
For that is dere boghte honour,
At regard of oure gret ese.
And yet ye most us more plese;
Let us be holden, eke therto,
Worthy, wise, and goode also,
And riche, and happy unto love.
For Goddes love that sit above,
Thogh we may not the body have
Of wymmen, yet, so God yow save,
Leet men glewe on us the name;
Suffiseth that we han the fame.'
'I graunte,' quod she, 'be my trouthe!
Now Eolus, withouten slouthe,
Take out thy trumpe of golde,' quod she,
'And blowe as they han axed me,

That every man wene hem at ese,
Though they goon in ful badde lese.'
This Eolus gan hit so blowe,
That thorugh the worlde hyt was yknowe.
Thoo come the seventh route anoon,
And fille on knees everychoon,
And seyde, 'Lady, graunte us sone
The same thing, the same bone,
That this nexte folke han doon.'
'Fy on yow,' quod she, 'everychoon!
Ye maisly swyne, ye ydel wrecches,
Ful of roten slowe tecches!
What? fals theves! or ye wolde,
Be famous good, and nothing nolde
Deserve why, ne never ye roughte,
Men rather yow hangen oughte![1]
For ye be lyke the swynt[2] catte,
That wolde have fissh; but wastow whatte?
He wolde nothinge wete his clowes.
Ywel thrifte come to your jowes,
And eke to myn yif I hit graunte,
Or do yow favour yow to avaunte!
Thou Eolus, thou kynge of Trace,
Goo, blowe this folke a sory grace,'
Quod she, 'anoon; and wostow how,
As I shal telle ryghte now.
Sey, These ben that wolden honour
Have, and do no skynnes labour,
Ne doo no good, and yet han lawde;
And that men wende that bele Isawde,[3]
Ne coude hem noght of love werne;
And yet she that grynt atte querne,[4]

[1] That is, 'Rather than you should have good fame without deserving it, or even caring to deserve it, men ought to hang you.'

[2] *Swynt* appears to be put for *swinkt*, the past participle of *to swinke*, to labour, and to mean tired. Thus Milton:—'the o'er-swinkt hedger.'

[3] *Isawde* or *Isulte*, the heroine of the celebrated romance of *Tristram*. —See vol. iv. p. 200, note 5.

[4] *Grint* is the contracted form of *grindeth*. To grind at the quern,

Is alle to good to ese her herte.'
  This Eolus anoon up sterte,
And with his blake clarioun
He gan to blasen out a soun,
As lowde as beloweth wynde in helle.
And eke therwith, sothe to telle,
This soune was so ful of japes,
As ever mowes were in apes.
And that went al the worlde aboute,
That every wight gan on hem shoute,
And for to lawghe as they were wode;
Suche game fonde they in her hode.
  Tho come another companye,
That had ydoon the trayterye,
The harme and grete wikkednesse,
That any herte kouthe gesse;
And prayed her to han good fame,
And that she nolde doon hem no shame,
But yeve hem loos and good renoun,
And do hyt blowe in a clarioun.
'Nay, wis!' quod she, 'hyt were a vice;
Al be ther in me no justice,
Me lyste not to doo hyt nowe,
Ne this nyl I graunte yowe.'
  Tho come ther lepynge in a route,
And gunne choppen al aboute
Every man upon the crowne,
That alle the halle gan to sowne;
And seyden, 'Lady, leefe and dere,
We ben suche folkes as ye mowe here.
To telle al the tale aryghte,
We ben shrewes every wyghte,

---

or hand-mill, was a peculiarly servile office. Thus Simo threatens Davus:—

'Si sensero hodie, quidquam in his te nuptiis
Fallaciæ conari, quo fiant minus,
Aut velle in eâ te ostendi, quam sis callidus,
Verberibus cæsum te *in pistrinum*, Dave, dedam usque ad necem.'
Andria, Act i. sc. 2.

And han delyte in wikkednes,
As goode folke han in goodnes;
And joye to be knowen shrewes,
And ful of vices and wikked thewes;
Wherefore we preye yow a rowe,
That oure fame suche be knowe,
In alle thing ryghte as hit is.
'I graunte hyt yow,' quod she, 'ywis.
But what art thow that seyst this tale,
That werest on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tipet suche a belle?'
'Madame,' quod he, 'sothe to telle,
I am that ylke shrewe, ywis,
That brende the temple of Ysidis[1]
In Athenes, loo, that citee.'
'And wherfor didest thou so?' quod she.
'By my thrift,' quod he, 'madame,
I wolde fayne han hadde a fame,
As other folke hadde in the towne,
Allethough they were of grete renoune
For her vertue and her thewes,
Thought I, as grete fame han shrewes,
(Though hit be noght[2]) for shrewdenesse,
As good folke han for godenesse;
And sith I may not have that oon,
That other nyl I noght forgoon.
As for to gette of fames hire,
The temple set I alle a-fire.

---

[1] There can be little doubt that Chaucer here alludes to the burning of the Temple of Diana at Ephesus; but why he calls that goddess by her Egyptian name of Ysis, or Isis, is not clear. The circumstance is related by Valerius Maximus, who says that the incendiary, when tortured by an instrument called *eculeus*, confessed that his motive was that his name might be known to all the world as the destroyer of so beautiful an edifice. The *pale* on his hose may perhaps denote the *eculeus*, or instrument of his torture; the bell on his tippet, the object of his crime, a bell being the emblem of publicity.—See vol. iv. p. 174.

[2] *Noght* here means bad, or naughty. It is used in this sense by Shakspeare:—

He swore the mustard was naught.'

Now doon, our loos be blowen swithe,
As wisly be thou ever blythe.'
'Gladly,' quod she. 'Thow Eolus,
Herestow not what this folke prayen us?'
'Madame, yis, ful wel,' quod he,
'And I wil trumpen hit, parde!'
And toke his blake trumpe faste,
And gan to puffen and to blaste,
Til hyt was at the worldes ende.
With that I gan aboute wende,
For oon that stoode ryght at my bake,
Me thought ful goodely to me spake,
And seyde, 'Frende, what is thy name?
Artow come hider to han fame?'
'Nay, forsothe, frende!' quod I;
'I cam noght hyder, graunt mercy,
For no suche cause, by my hede!
Sufficeth me, as I were dede,
That no wight have my name in honde.
I wote my selfe best how I stonde,
For what I drye or what I thynke,
I wil my selfe alle hyt drynke,
Certeyn for the more parte,
As ferforthe as I kan myn arte.'
'But what doost thou here?' quod he.
Quod I, 'That wyl I tellen the,
The cause why I stonde here.
Somme newe tydyngis for to lere,
Somme newe thinge, I not what,
Tydynges other this or that,
Of love, or suche thinges glade.
For, certeynly, he that me made
To come hyder seyde me
I shulde bothe here and se,
In this place, wonder thynges;
But these be no suche tydynges
As I mene of.—'Noo?' quod he.
And I answerde, 'Noo, parde!

For wel I wote ever yit,
Sith that first I hadde wit,
That somme folke han desired fame
Diversly, and loos and name;
But certeynly I nyste howe,
Ne where that Fame dwelled, or nowe;
And eke of her descripcioun,
Ne also her condicioun,
Ne the ordre of her dome,
Unto tyme I thidder come.'
'Why than, loo, be these tydynges,
That thow now hider brynges,
That thou hast herde?' quod he to me;
'But now, no fors; for wel I se
What thou desirest for to lere.
Come forth, and stonde no lenger here,
And I wil the, withouten drede,
In suche another place lede,
Ther thou shalt here many oon.'
Tho gan I forthe with hym goon,
Oute of the castel, sothe to sey.
Tho saugh I stonde in a valey,
Under the castel faste by,
An house, that domus Dedaly,
That Laborintus[1] ycleped ys,
Nas made so wonderlyche ywis,
Ne half so queyntlyche ywrought.
And evermo, so swyft as thought,
This queynte hous aboute went,
That nevermo stille hyt stent.
And theroute come so grete a noyse,
That had hyt stonde upon Oyse,[2]
Men myghte hyt han herd esely
To Rome, I trowe sikerly.

[1] The labyrinth made by Dædalus for Minos, King of Crete, in imitation of the celebrated one in Egypt, described by Herodotus, ii. 148.

[2] This is one of the passages upon which Warton founds his belief in the continental origin of this poem.

And the noyse which that I have herde,
For alle the world right so hyt ferde,
As dooth the rowtynge of the stoon,
That from thengyne ys leten goon.[1]
And al thys hous of whiche I rede,
Was made of twigges, salwe, rede,
And grene eke, and somme weren white,
Swiche as men to these cages thwite,
Or maken of these panyers,
Or elles hattes or dossers;
That for the swough and for the twygges,
This house was al so ful of gygges,
And al so ful eke of chirkynges,
And of many other werkynges;—[2]
And eke this hous hath of entrees
As dele of leves as ben on trees,
In somer whan they grene ben,
And on the rove men may yet seen
A thousand holes, and wel moo,
To leten wel the soune oute goo.
And be day in every tyde
Been alle the dores opened wide,

---

[1] These engines, called by the ancients *ballistæ* and *catapultæ*, were constructed on the principle of a crossbow, drawn back by machinery. They constituted the siege artillery of the crusaders. The following is a description of one used by Richard I. at the siege of Acre:—'He had also built one (a petraria, as it was called), put together very compactly, which the people called 'Berefred,' with steps to mount it, fitting most tightly to it, covered with raw hides and ropes, and having layers of most solid wood, not to be destroyed by any blows, nor open to injury from the pouring thereon of Greek fire, or any other material. He also prepared two mangonels, one of which was of such violence and rapidity, that what it hurled reached the inner rows of the city market-place. These engines were plied day and night; and it is well known that a stone sent from one of them killed twelve men with its blow.'—GEOF. OF VINS. *Itin. of King Richard*, b. iii. 7. Eng. Trans.

[2] In the first member of this sentence, the house is said to be as (al so) full of gygges, &c., which would require a corresponding member, beginning, also, with *as*, to complete the sense; but it does not follow. It was probably left incomplete by the author; for the Fairfax MS., instead of the line, *And of many other werkinges* (probably an interpolation), has this imperfect verse, *As ful this, lo.*

And be nyght echoon unshette,
Ne porter ther is noon to lette
No maner tydynges in to pace;
Ne never rest is in that place,
That hit nys filde ful of tydynges,
Other loude or of wisperynges;
And over alle the houses angles,
Ys ful'of rounynges and of jangles,
Of werres, of pes, of mariages,
Of restes, of labour, of viages,
Of abood, of deeth, of lyfe,
Of love, of hate, acorde, of stryfe,
Of loos, of lore, and of wynnynges,
Of hele, of sekenesse, of bildynges,
Of faire wyndes, of tempestes,
Of qwalme of folke, and eke of bestes;
Of dyvers transmutaciouns,
Of estates and eke of regiouns;
Of trust, of drede, of jelousye,
Of witte, of wynnynge, of folye;
Of plente, and of grete famyne,
Of chepe, of derthe, and of ruyne;
Of good or mysgovernement,
Of fire, and of dyvers accident.[1]

---

[1] This description is a gothic amplification of that in Ovid:—

'Orbe locus medius est inter terrasque fretumque
Cœlestesque plagas, triplicis confinia mundi;
Unde quod est usquam, quamvis regionibus absit,
Inspicitur; penetratque cavas vox omnis ad aures.
Fama tenet, summâque domum sibi legit in arce:
Innumerosque aditus, ac mille foramina tectis
Addidit; et nullis inclusit limina portis.
Nocte, dieque patent; tota est ex aure sonanti:
Tota fremit: vocesque refert: iteratque quod audit.
Nulla quies intus, nullâque silentia parte.
Nec tamen est clamor, sed parvæ murmura vocis:
Qualia de pelagi, si quis procul audiat, undis
Esse solent: qualemve sonum, cum Jupiter atras
Increpuit nubes, extrema tonitrua reddunt.
Atria turba tenent: veniunt leve vulgus, euntque;
Mista cum veris passim commenta vagantur.

And loo, thys hous of which I write,
Syker be ye, hit nas not lyte;
For hit was sixty myle of lengthe,
Alle was the tymber of no strengthe;
Yet hit is founded to endure,
While that hit lyst to Aventure,
That is the moder of tydynges,
As the see of welles and sprynges;
And hyt was shapen lyke a cage.
'Certys,' quod I, 'in al myne age,
Ne saugh I suche an hous as this.'
And as I wondred me, ywis,
Upon this hous, tho war was I,
How that myn egle, faste by,
Was perched hye upon a stoon;
And I gan streighte to hym goon,
And seyde thus:—'I preye the
That thou a while abide me
For goddes love, and lete me seen
What wondres in this place been;
For yit paraunture I may lere
Somme good thereon, or sumwhat here
That leef me were, or that I went.'
'Petre!' that is myn entent,'
Quod he to me; 'therfore I dwelle,
But certeyn oon thyng I the telle,
That, but I bringe the therinne,
Ne shalt thou never kunne gynne
To come into hyt, out of doute,
So faste hit whirleth, lo, aboute.

Millia rumorum: confusaque verba volutant.
E quibus hi vacuas implent sermonibus auras:
Hi narrata ferunt alio: mensuraque ficti
Crescit; et auditis aliquid novus adjicit auctor.
Illic Credulitas, illic temerarius Error
Vanaque Letitia est, consternatique timores,
Seditioque repens, dubioque auctore Susurri.'
Metam. xii. 39.

[1] See *ante*, p. 226, note 4.

But sithe that Jovys, of his grace,
As I have seyde, wol the solace,
Fynally with these thinges,
Unkouthe syghtes and tydynges,
To passe with thyn hevynesse,
Soch routhe hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffrest debonairly,
And wost they selfen outterly,
Disesperat of alle blys,
Syth that fortune hath made amys
The frot of al thyn hertes reste
Languissh and eke in poynt to breste,—[1]
But he thorugh hys myghty merite,
Wol do thee ese, al be hyt lyte,
And yaf in expresse commaundement,
To whiche I am obedient,
To further thee with al my myghte,
And wisse and teche the aryghte,
Where thou maist most tydynges here,
Shaltow here anoon many oon lere.'
With this worde he ryght anoon,
Hent me up bytwexe his tone,
And at a wyndowe yn me broght,
That in his hous was, as me thought;
And therwithalle me thought hit stent,
And nothinge hyt aboute went;
And me set in the flore adoun.
But whiche a congregacioun
Of folke, as I saugh rome aboute,
Some withinne and some withoute,
Nas never seen, ne shal ben efte,
That, certys, in the worlde nys lefte,
So many formed be Nature,
Ne dede so many a creature,

[1] There appears to be here some allusion to the poet's personal history. Or it may be only the conventional expression of despair for the unkindness of his mistress, which is part of every poet's stock-in-trade.

That wel unnethe in that place
Hadde I a fote brede of space,
And every wight that I saugh there,
Rouned everich in otheres ere,
A newe tydynge prevely,
Or elles tolde alle openly
Ryght thus, and seyde, 'Nost not thou
That ys betydde, lo, righte now.'[1]
'No,' quod he, 'Telle me what.'
And than he tolde hym this and that,
And swor therto that hit was sothe,
'Thus hath he seyde,' and 'Thus he dothe,'
And 'Thus shal hit be,' and 'Thus herde I seye,'
'That shal be founde, that dare I leye.'
That alle the folke that ys a lyve,
Ne han the kunnynge to discryve,
Tho thynges that I herde there,
What aloude, and what in ere.
But al the wonder most was this:—
Whanne oon had herd a thinge, ywis,
He come forther to another wighte,
And gan him tellen anon ryght,
The same thynge that him was tolde,
Or hyt a forlonge way was olde,
And gan sommewhat for to eche
To this tydynge in his speche,
More than hit ever was.
And nat so sone departed nas
That he fro him than he ne mette
With the thrid; and, or he lette
Any stownde, he told hym als;
Were the tydynge sothe or fals,
Yit wolde he telle hyt natheles,
And evermo with more encres,
Than yt was erst. Thus north and southe,
Went every mothe[1] fro mouthe to mouthe,

[1] For *mothe* the printed editions read *tidinge*. *Mothe* may possibly mean *myth*, or fable.

And that encresing evermoo,
As fire ys wont to quyk and goo
From a sparke spronge amys,
Til alle a citee brent up ys.
And whan that was ful yspronge,
And woxen more on every tonge
Thyn ever hit was, and went anoon
Up to a wyndowe out to goon,
Or but hit myghte oute there pace,
Hyt gan oute crepe at somme crevace,
And flygh forthe faste for the nones.
And somtyme saugh I thoo, at ones
A lesyng and a sadde sothe sawe,
That gonne of aventure thrawe,
Oute to a wyndowe for to pace;
And, when they metten in that place,
They were acheked bothe two,
And neyther of hem most oute goo;
For other so they gonne crowde,
Til eche of hem gan crien lowde,
'Lat me go first!'—'Nay, but let me!
And here I wol ensuren the
Wyth vowes that thou wolt do so,
That I shal never fro the go,
But be thyn owne sworen brother![1]
We wil medle us eche with other,
That no man, be they never so wrothe,
Shal han on or two, but bothe
At ones, as beside his leve,
Come we a morwe or on eve,
Be we cried or stille yrowned.'
Thus saugh I fals and sothe, compowned,
Togeder fle for oo tydynge.
Thus oute at holes gunne wringe
Every tydynge streight to Fame;
And she gan yeve eche hys name,

[1] See vol. i. p. 124, note 1.

After hir disposicioun,
And yaf hem eke duracioun,
Some to wexe and wane sone,
As dothe the faire white mone,
And lete hem goon. Ther myght I seen
Winged wondres faste fleen,
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blewe aboute.
And, lord! this hous in alle tymes
Was ful of shipmen and pilgrimes,
With scrippes bret-ful[1] of lesynge,
Entremedled with tydynges,
And eke allone be hemselve.
O, many thousand tymes twelve
Saugh I eke of these pardoneres,
Currours, and eke messangeres,
With boystes crammed ful of lyes,
As ever vessell was with lyes.[2]
And as I alther-fastest went
Aboute, and did al myn entent,
Me for to pleyen and for to lere,
And eke a tydynge for to here,
That I had herd of somme contre
That shal not now be tolde for me;
For hit no nede is, redely;
Folke kan synge hit bet than I.
For alle mote oute other late or rathe,
Alle the sheves in the lathe.[3]
I herde a grete noyse withalle
In a corner of the halle,
Ther men of love tydynges tolde,
And I gan thiderwarde beholde;

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[1] See vol. i. p. 105, note 4.

[2] *Lyes* appears in this place to mean *lees*, or perhaps *lye*, potash.

[3] A metaphor from the labours of the husbandman. Every piece of news must, sooner or later, come to light, even as every sheaf in the barn [*lathe*, still in use in the north of England], must, in its turn, be taken out and threshed.

For I saugh rennynge every wighte,
As faste as that they hadden myghte;
And everyche cried, 'What thing is that?'
And somme sayde 'I not never what.'
And whan they were alle on an hepe,
Tho behynde begunne up lepe,
And clamben up on other faste,
And up the noyse on highen kaste,
And troden faste on otheres heles,
And stampen, as men doon after eles.[1]
Atte last I saugh a man,
Whiche that I nat, ne kan,
But he semed for to be
A man of grete auctorite.
And therewithalle I abrayde
Out of my sleepe, halfe afraide;
Remembring well what I had sene,
And how hye and fer I hadde bene
In my goste; and had grete wonder
Of that the god of thonder
Hadde lete me knowen; and gan to write
Like as ye have herde me endite.
Wherefore to study and rede alway,
I purpose to do day by day.
Thus in dreming and in game,
Endeth this lytel booke of Fame.

HERE ENDÈTH THE BOOKE OF FAME.

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[1] This ludicrous simile, of a man endeavouring to secure a number of live eels by stamping upon them, is quite in the style of *Hudibras*.

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